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 THURSDAY, OCTOBER 21, 1880.

THE POSITION OF CONGREGATIONALISM.

THE meetings of the two sections of Congregationalism—that of the Baptist Union in London and that of the Congregational Union in Birmingham—do not furnish any encouragement to those who assert that Dissent is on the decline, and, with a wish, that is father to the thought, fondly anticipate the not distant day when the National Church will have absorbed in her own comprehensive communion these now discordant elements. Congregationalism is unquestionably the great force of English Nonconformity—felt to be so by its foes, and hated accordingly. Methodism possesses a more perfect organisation, is able to produce a greater impression by the imposing character of its great movements, may possibly point to a larger number of adherents, but it does not count for so much in the ecclesiastical and political work of the age as Congregationalism. The division of its forces into two separate armies to some extent weakens its strength and possibly diminishes its influence. But that is a condition of things which must be accepted. Slight as the difference which exists between the two denominations may appear to members on both sides, it is abundantly clear that for the present, at all events, there can be no hope of amalgamation. Not the less, however, is there an identity of opinion and a power of sympathy on all subjects lying outside the difference which practically makes Congregationalism an undivided force on the most important questions of the day. In the protest against the degradation of the religion of CHRIST by its subjection to Parliamentary control, in the clear assertion of the rights of the individual conscience, in the resistance to the revival of mediæval superstition, in the contention on behalf of the great principle of national righteousness, the voice of Congregationalism is one, and its power is everywhere felt. It has assuredly no reason to be ashamed of the position it holds and the influence it commands, and if we are to judge from the indications at Birmingham last week, it has not the faintest idea of extinction. Beyond all other systems the influence of Congregationalism is not to be judged merely by the visible results which it produces. It is a great leavening power, the working of which is to be seen in the Churches most opposed, and whose members are blissfully unconscious of the debt which they owe to it and of the extent to which they have accepted its principles, hardly less than within its own ranks. But Congregationalists are not content with this indirect power. They feel that they have their place in the spiritual forces of the nation, and they are resolved to accept it with loyalty to their Master and their principles. At both the recent assemblies there were the same signs of earnestness and vitality. The meetings of the Congregational Union were distinguished specially by the spirit with which great practical questions were discussed. The spirit was eminently aggressive, but aggressive against ignorance, unbelief, sin of every kind. Not a word was spoken which breathed the spirit of proselytism or suggested that the great business of the Nonconformists was to extinguish episcopacy, or to win converts from the ranks of the Anglican Church, after the fashion in which some too vehement partisans of the Church talked at Leicester and elsewhere of conversions from Dissent. But of resolution to develop all the innate force that is in Congregationalism for grappling with scepticism, or cultivating the neglected wastes of irreligion and indifference, and in general for making the churches more efficient by the evangelisation of the country, there was no lack. English Congregationalists feel that they have a high mission, and they are bent on fulfilling it.

They have certainly enough, in their progress during the fifty years of the life of the Union, to warrant them in celebrating its Jubilee with thankfulness, and to encourage them to effort of a still loftier character in the future. We observe that some of the speakers were disposed to draw very gloomy conclusions from recent statistics, which seemed to prove that the increase of Congregationalists during the last decade or two had been less rapid than that of other communities. Even were the matter one of mere statistics, the inferences were too hasty and too desponding in their tone. In estimating the ratio of increase, it is always necessary to remember the point from which the calculation starts, or the reasoning may be most fallacious. Presbyterianism, for example, was at so low a point some twenty years ago, or even less, that it was easy for it to increase at the rate of cent. per cent. without doing anything like the work which Congregationalism would have to do in order to secure a mere fraction of that advance. The

progress of Presbyterianism, too, has been at the cost of Congregationalism, which used to be considerably strengthened by Scotchmen who preferred the simplicity of its worship to the more elaborate ritual of the Established Church. The Free Churches have gained largely by this newly-developed energy of Presbyterianism which, in its hatred of Erastianism and of Popery alike, is sure to be a force strongly antagonistic to the State Church, despite the Conservative propensities of some of its supporters. Nor ought Congregationalists to look with any jealousy upon its growth so long as there are no attempts to promote it by unfair means. There are elements of power, especially among the Scotch residents in our large towns, which it can utilise more effectually than Congregationalism has ever been able to do, and the wiser Congregationalists ought to feel that they are strengthened by the accession of workers with whom they have so much in common. Still, the result is a diminution of the power of their own system, which would otherwise, in all probability, have absorbed considerable numbers who have found their natural home among Presbyterians. It is necessary to bear this in mind, or a very false conception will be formed as to the energy which Congregationalism has displayed of late years. As a matter of fact, it has been growing in every way—erecting new chapels, increasing the number of its ministers, gathering new adherents, improving and extending all its institutions. Those who love it best would be the most willing to admit deficiencies, to which their affection makes them even more keenly alive than outsiders. But it is unquestionably one of the mightiest spiritual forces in the country, and its influence is felt in social and political, as well as in religious life.

The Congregational Union has met in Birmingham on three previous occasions. The annual meeting of 1838, was held there, and in the year following it saw the first of the autumnal gatherings. In 1861, on the eve of the Bicentenary celebration, it received the Union again, and now once more in 1880. Last week's meeting was far in advance of the previous one in point of numbers and influence, but we have to compare it with that of 1839 to have an adequate conception of the progress which has been made within the generation. Something is, doubtless, due to the growing popularity of the Union itself. The small company who met in 1839 was very far from being as complete a representation of the Congregationalism of that period as was the magnificent assembly which thronged Carr's-lane Chapel on the successive mornings of last week of the Congregationalism of to-day. But making all due allowance for this fact, the gain has still been very remarkable. Nor is it only, or even chiefly, an advance in numbers; there has been a still greater development of spirit. The Assembly, year by year, shows more of a national and less of a sectarian or provincial temper. There is still room for improvement in this respect; but the careful observer cannot fail to note an increasing disregard of the petty interests of a narrow denominationalism, and a desire to inspire the Churches with a more catholic spirit and to feel their work as done, not for a party, but for the nation and for the Church at large, and for the one Master who rules over all. We write thus not from any disposition to indulge in self-gratulation, but rather in the hope of impressing Congregationalists generally with a true sense of the responsibility which this position lays upon them. It is no time for them to rest upon their laurels; but, on the contrary, their very success imposes on them the necessity for redoubled exertions. They have advanced so far that they cannot retreat, and it remains to be seen whether they are equal to the great opportunities which Providence has prepared for them. Before the second Jubilee of the Union is reached great ecclesiastical changes will have taken place in the country, and there is no Church which is more imperatively called to prepare for them. Congregationalists can never again be content to limit their efforts to the maintenance of their own communities in more or less of prosperity. They have acknowledged their duty to the nation, and they must show themselves able and willing for its performance. The Jubilee year of the Union is a fitting occasion for the exhibition of a new spirit of enterprise and liberality, and we hope it will be so improved as to mark a very distinct era in their progress.

NOTES ON THE UNION MEETINGS.

THERE was one feature, unconsciously but not less distinctly marked, at the meetings of the Congregational Union at Birmingham which the increasing circle of observers who, with blinking eyes and prejudiced imaginations, are studying the phenomena of Nonconformity, would do well to note. It is a favourite theory among State Church-

men that the leading principle which animates the various denominations of Dissenters is one of wilful and unreasoning aversion to the Establishment, and to all that tends to maintain the advantages which it holds out to those who are nominally its members, and which Nonconformists in their heart of hearts are secretly sighing for, while perversely unwilling to share. We hear, *ad nauseam*, of "Political Dissenters" who are supposed to be the very incarnation of this jealous and perverse spirit. Well, this anathematised class have just realised a signal victory. Trampling down, we are told, both the Eighth Commandment and Magna Charta, they have obtained the right to inter their dead with their own religious ceremonies in the national graveyards; and so bitter are some of the clergy at the change in the law, that Bishops find it necessary to exhort their clerical brethren to leave off "shrieking" and to apply themselves to the duties of their station in a rational and becoming manner. The Congregationalists, ever in the forefront of the battle for civil rights and religious equality, held their "great congregation" last week for the first time since the Act was brought into operation, and instead of the assembly being a scene of crowding and wing-flapping over defeated antagonists, the scant references made to the subject were instinct with a spirit of conciliation and a desire to soothe, as far as possible, the *amour propre* of those who had resisted them. Upon the theory that the one cherished purpose of Nonconformists is the humiliation of State Churchmen, such tactics as this would be unaccountable. Inasmuch, then, as they have the cordial concurrence of every shade of Dissent, State Churchmen ought to formulate a theory more capable of reconciliation with the facts of life than that which has been thus manifestly discredited.

Three leading subjects mainly engrossed the thoughts and deliberations of the ministers and delegates in these half-yearly conferences. There were statistics from different parts of the country, prepared with a view, not to glorify the efforts made by Congregationalists, as compared with other religious denominations, bond or free, but to point out how large a proportion of the community still remains outside the range of influence exerted by all religious bodies combined. The edifices provided by all the variously designated denominations of Christians, who, all in their own way, strive with earnest self-denial to withdraw men's thoughts from the things of time and sense to those connected with a world beyond the grave, are shown to be at the same time inadequate, to the extent of millions of sittings, for the proportion of the population who theoretically should be found seeking their accommodation, and largely in excess of the requirements of those who are habitually found prepared to avail themselves of it. The causes of this state of affairs afforded occasion for much genuine heart-searching and frank utterance. To a consideration of the special influence which sceptical thought exerts in this direction the whole of one morning's session was dedicated. Speech was unrestrained, and well-nigh every possible objection which could be urged against ordinary plans of working was freely ventilated and patiently considered. Members of a denomination whose traditions have favoured line-upon-line instructions more than emotional extravagances, listened with candour and seriously laid to heart the question whether a too scrupulous avoidance of all that might be regarded as savouring of sensationalism, may not tend to repress the fervour of spiritual life.

The suggested remedies for the evils and shortcomings so candidly laid bare were discussed in the same practical, forbearing, and large-hearted spirit. The large proportion in which the ministerial element was represented in the conferences necessitated no unfaithful reticence as to the present wants of the age in regard to improved ministerial culture. The presence of the Principal of one of our Colleges in the chair, and of members of the professorial staff of our colleges and institutes, positively gave a most important stimulus to those needful changes, in the way of such an amalgamation of institutions as will enable them better to perform the great end for which they were designed. Those who know the ordinary influences which endowments and vested interests are too apt to exert will accept this as very gratifying evidence of the excellent spirit which pervades these "schools of the prophets." The ultimate aim set before the denomination was no less than this—that while in their Arts course ministerial students shall be subjected to that healthy and invigorating intellectual discipline which our national universities afford, special denominational efforts shall be concentrated on theological training; and to securing effectiveness in this direction, ample time for proficiency in the several branches of study undertaken shall be secured for the professors to whose care those students are confided.

In spite of all the flippant criticism and imbecile scoffs directed against the pulpit, there was no mistrust in that assembly as to the permanence in the Church of the future of the office of pastor and preacher. At the same time there was a resolute determination that "the men who occupy that position shall be, to the fullest extent possible, thoroughly furnished for the duties which thus devolve upon them. The progress of the age can be no reason for inferiority in the pulpit. Where is the law of the Divine Kingdom which requires that the ablest expounders of Scripture, the most persuasive pleaders, and the men whose hearts are most aglow with love for their fellow-men, must permanently occupy the pews? It is not from such as these that the most bitter complaints come of pulpit inefficiency; but rather, for the most part, from those who are apathetic and indifferent to the message which is there proclaimed.

The maintenance of the pastoral office does not, however, prescribe limits to the number of those who are to proclaim the Gospel message. This position was very emphatically affirmed in the recent Union meetings. By none more than by ministers themselves was the idea of a claim to anything analogous to priestly functions more distinctly repudiated. Even the term "lay preachers" was excepted to on this ground, and an attempt was made to substitute for it a phrase to which no such exception could be taken. It was pleasing to notice the perfect unconcern which was evinced as to the particular section of the Master's Vineyard from which hints for improvements in method were obtained. Congregationalists were not shocked either by the idea of "preaching plans," which savoured somewhat of Methodism, or of the grouping of mission stations under the superintendence of the minister of a central church—an arrangement from which it is more than probable that in the early Church, Episcopacy had its origin. Efficient instrumentality was the point to which thought was directed; the watchful criticism of intelligent minds, instructed in the lessons of ecclesiastical history, and imbued with a love for primitive simplicity, being trusted to guard against abuses in the direction of excess.

The spirit of aggression against the apathy and unbelief of the age was equally marked. The "garden walled around" theory of a Christian Church was an ideal which had its sufficient justification in the days when liberty of worship was assailed by both legal and illegal violence; but the more Scriptural idea is that of the banquet hall from which the earlier guests were to sally forth into the highways and byways that the house might be filled. And activity in Christian enterprise on definite denominational lines was shown to be compatible with co-operative effort in the spirit of true Christian unity. "Small causes," where they are upholding, under great difficulties, and displaying to all who will heed, the Gospel light amidst prevailing darkness, must be preserved and strengthened with all the inspiration and aid which have their outcome from Christian sympathy; but the multiplication of small chapels in a district which could be better served by some one vigorous organisation will, we venture to believe, be increasingly disconcerted by the leading Nonconformist denominations. Now that attention has been so fully directed to the subject, there can be no doubt that the practical common-sense and good feeling of English Christians will suffice to remove from Nonconformity the existing reproach. There can be little doubt, as was well pointed out by one of the speakers—and although this is of subsidiary importance, it has an importance of its own—that some citizens who recognise the evils and anomalies of the State Church system withhold assent from any vigorous effort for its abolition, through an undefined fear lest in some way the religious advantages possessed by the nation would be diminished as a result. The Free Churches, when they have utilised their resources and allocated their agents in the manner most effective for the spiritual work, will find that they have at the same time dissipated this lingering fear. Either from permanent churches, mission stations, or through the agency of itinerating evangelists, the Gospel light must irradiate the country throughout its entire length and breadth. Where rural districts with small populations possess in the churches of the Establishment a faithful and devoted ministry, localities not similarly favoured should by no means be neglected in order to introduce Nonconformity in a spirit of merely sectarian rivalry. But where the sacramental superstition is rampant, there should be no quailing before the rampant spirit of domination, nor deference to the seductive blandishments which go forth in the shape of soup and coal tickets, and other devices of sacerdotal bribery. The steady extension of the resources of the Church-Aid and Home Missionary Society will

enable Congregationalists to take their part with other Nonconformists in invading energetically all these priestly preserves.

At the meeting for young people in the Town-hall, on Wednesday, Sir CHARLES REED put forth a timely plea for education of the young in Congregational families in the principles of Congregationalism. Educational advantages are being multiplied on every hand, but the diffusion of the great principles, with the maintenance of which Congregationalists have charged themselves, must still continue to be their own especial care. It is a hopeful sign of the times that they are now permeating, in a large measure, all sections of the Christian Church; but there is none the less a necessity for a clear definition, and emphatic enunciation, at suitable times, of those principles in their integrity and simplicity; and for such declarations favourable opportunities have been afforded in the past, and will continue to be afforded in the future in the recurring assemblies of the Congregational Union of England and Wales. We venture to think that a careful study of the record of the proceedings which took place in Birmingham last week will produce the impression on the most prejudiced Churchman, that there is one object which is still dearer to British Congregationalists than disestablishment, and that is—the effective evangelisation of the entire mass of their countrymen.

One Bishop has publicly stated that the members of the Episcopal Bench are about to consider the Burials Act with a view to some definite recommendations to the clergy. We shall be curious to see the nature of their advice. Many Bishops, as our columns have lately shown, have already declared themselves, but they are far from agreeing, except in the cheap advice that the clergy should be conciliatory. "Stick to the fees in all cases," says one, "for they are a trust." "Ignore them," says another; "they ought not to be thought of by Christian ministers." Some will consecrate additional ground and new churchyards; others not. "It would be very invidious not to toll the bell for Dissenters," says the Bishop of LICHFIELD. "Keep that for Churchmen," urges he of SALISBURY; while a third would compromise the matter by allowing the bell to be set going at the death, though not at the interment, of a Nonconformist by a Nonconformist. But they all agree to recommend the clergy to carry out the law in respect to registration. These are sharp contrasts, and a good deal of lubricating oil will be needed to harmonise them—if, indeed, it is found to be possible.

Apparently the bishops—perhaps the Law Courts—will have to deal with a few recalcitrant parsons. At Teddington a very high-handed course of procedure has been resorted to with a view to depriving Nonconformists of the benefit secured to them by the new Act. A gardener named Hoare, possessing a family grave in the parish churchyard, in due compliance with the specified regulations, gave notice of his intention to have the remains of his child interred there on Saturday last, without the rites of the Church of England. Four hours before the time fixed for the ceremony, a letter from one of the churchwardens was left at the father's house, refusing permission, "as the churchyard is full," and referring him to the consecrated portion of the cemetery. The indisputable fact is that the churchyard has not been closed by an Order in Council; and there is a prevalent impression that it is fully intended to allow the ground to be used in the future as in the past by any who may require it—except Nonconformists. At the time appointed the funeral party proceeded to the grave, but as no preparations had been made for the burial, the coffin of the child had to be taken back to the father's house. The Burials Act has afforded some latitude to the State clergy as to change of hour; with that exception it declares peremptorily, "the burial shall take place . . . in accordance with such notice." In this case it becomes a question as to the bearing of Section 7 of the Act on the churchwarden who refused to allow the interment, and the sexton who neglected to dig the grave, for that section pronounces guilty of a "misdemeanour" any person "wilfully obstructing such burial." The Conservative Standard, in unmistakable terms, denounces the "ecclesiastical zeal" which has given rise to a "burial scandal" which is "not only painful, but almost indecent," and warns the friends of the Establishment that the interests of the Church are imperilled by the conduct of those who "vexatiously interfere to prevent Nonconformists enjoying all the privileges which Mr. OSBORNE MORGAN'S Act confers upon them." There is still the inconvenient question to be faced, what is to be done with the corpse which has been refused decent burial? "The relatives," says the writer, "appear to insist on their right either to bury it in the churchyard or keep it unburied, until the 'legal difficulty' raised by the churchwarden has been settled. If that difficulty takes some time to settle, as most legal difficulties

do, it is open to doubt whether it was worth while on 'sanitary grounds' to object to the body being laid in the consecrated ground round the old parish church." We hoped that, with the close of the BEACONSFIELD régime, we had heard the last of the hypocritical "sanitary" pretext for denying to Nonconformists their legal rights; but as the question has been raised in this flagrant manner, we trust that steps will be taken for its authoritative settlement, as a salutary warning to all those who are thus striving to subordinate the law of the land to the whims of ecclesiastical lawlessness.

The campaign in favour of Scottish Disestablishment was opened at Edinburgh on Tuesday by a conference in which all sections of Dissenters north of the Tweed were represented. This assembly of representative men decided in favour of submitting a motion on the subject to Parliament next Session, and of issuing the scheme for Scottish Disestablishment and Disendowment, which has been for some time in preparation. These decisions seem to indicate that the question is coming within range of what is called practical politics. At the conference and public meeting which followed, United Presbyterians, Free Churchmen, Congregationalists, and other Scotch Dissenters were ranged side by side—a union which, if fully carried out, can hardly fail to be irresistible in the present state of the question.

The Rev. STOPFORD BROOKE, explaining in Bedford Chapel, on Sunday morning last, the principles which had led to his secession from the Church of England, uttered some weighty words which more than one section of the Church of England would do well to take to heart. The Broad Church party, with whom he is most nearly in sympathy on doctrinal points, were solemnly warned that the very life of religion in the mass of the people is imperilled, and its prospect of exerting any beneficial influence upon them is minimised, by the attitude of those who, denying the fundamental doctrines of Christianity, continue to occupy places among its recognised teachers. The *Pall Mall Gazette*, in an able article, exposes the untenable nature of the contention, that an heretical Churchman may retain his position until excluded by legal process. The sophistry is shown to be insufficient to relieve such a clergyman from a position of self-contradiction and falsity. "To gain his position," he is reminded, "he assented to the doctrines which he now denies. If he were going back to the point at which he was before his original assent gave him office, would the law, though now shrinking from a prosecution, admit him with his present denials? Is he not, accordingly, in the predicament of saying 'Yes' and 'No' at once—saying 'Yes' by his position, and 'No' with his lips?—and is such a condition of things consistent with self-respect and conscientious bearing?" The right of private judgment implies the obligation of private responsibility, and the anomaly is rendered still more flagrant by the thought that "Christianity, whatever else it is, means an endeavour to realise an absolute veracity." But there was another thought thrown out by Mr. BROOKE which should produce searchings of heart among a still larger section of the clergy. The theory of the State Church is, in his view, so inextricably mixed up with the old aristocratic system, that as an institution it is constantly brought into antagonism with the moving and living forces of society, and its message to the world is to a similar extent discredited. To employ the phraseology of the *Pall Mall Gazette*, the indictment sustainable against the State Church is that it is "aristocratic and exclusive in its constitution, while the elements in it that give it this character make it at the same time hostile to liberty of thought, and therefore to the progress of truth." Will those who profess to prize the Establishment for the service which it is supposed to render in the diffusion of spiritual life, consider whether, on an impartial review, the evils thus engendered do not far outweigh the benefits of an arrangement which on the face of it is unjust? for, as our evening contemporary aptly remarks: "When the State interposes to give prestige and support to one phrase of teaching, it handicaps all the rest, and makes it impossible to have that fair field and no favour on which it is generally admitted that the free conflict of opinions is most likely to elicit truth."

The deadlock at Guy's Hospital has been put an end to by the medical staff withdrawing the letter written in their name, and the governors withdrawing the demand for the resignations of Dr. HABERHORN and Mr. COOPER FOSTER. An arrangement has also been made by which four of the medical staff are to be admitted as acting members of the Weekly Committee. The *Spectator*, which has throughout the controversy pronounced against the action of the medical staff, now does not hesitate to condemn the existing system of government as an anachronism which calls for reform. The *Times* suggests that the arrangement which has been effected will only operate "for a time," and that the intervention of Parliament must be in-

voked if the medical men in practice find that they are reduced to the necessity of "seeing injurious rules enforced, of seeing patients maltreated, of seeing the treasurer and the matron deciding, ignorantly, and, therefore, often wrongly, on purely medical questions." There is no doubt that by the turn of events the difficulty of checking Ritualistic developments in the hospitals is seriously increased, but the friends of religious equality must not on that account relax that watchful attitude which the crafty tactics of their foes so imperatively demand.

THE TITHE RENT-CHARGE GRIEVANCE.

THE farmers of England have long been looked upon by others, and regarded by themselves, as the backbone of the Conservative party. When Liberals were in power a selected stock of grievances was steadily paraded by the wire-pullers of the Conservative party, only to be withdrawn into obscurity at the advent of a Conservative Government, when insistence upon their removal might prove embarrassing to the faction which had in some unaccountable manner been permitted to arrogate to themselves the title of "the farmers' friends." Mr. Gladstone's masterly stroke of finance, in the abolition of the Malt-tax, has already begun to work a revolution in the minds of the tenant farmers, which we venture to think is destined hereafter to exhibit some remarkable manifestations. In a county which at the last election returned by an overwhelming majority two Conservatives as their representatives, a scene took place last week which is sufficiently suggestive. Mr. John Wingfield is the occupier of Whistley Mill Farm, Hurst, which he has held for upwards of a quarter of a century, having succeeded his father in the tenancy. Much of the land is subject to floods, and the losses which he has sustained, in common with other farmers, have been aggravated in his case by inundations which have ruined a large portion of his crops. His landlord, Captain E. Leveson Gower, recognising the reasonableness of the claim, readily consented to an abatement of rent, but an application made on his behalf to the Ecclesiastical Commissioners for a reduction of the tithe rent-charge, £50 11s., was met with a very curt negative. This refusal has aroused throughout the district a very decided hostility, and, with the full concurrence of his neighbours, of various political views, Mr. Wingfield decided to throw upon the Commissioners the odium of enforcing their claim by distraint and sale by auction. A levy having been made upon a stack of oats and two stacks of beans, a London auctioneer attended on Tuesday sc'might for the purpose of the sale. When the preliminaries were being arranged, one farmer sarcastically offered the suggestion that the auctioneer, as representing the tithe-owners, should "offer up a prayer for poor Wingfield," before going on with the sale, "a remark," which we are told, "was greeted with applause, as was also the further suggestion from the same quarter, that, as at an execution, the sheriff or some official representative had to be present, that dignitary or his representative should have attended on this occasion." For lot 1, the stack of oats, the first bidding was "Twopence halfpenny," which was by slow stages increased to 16d., at which price the auctioneer declined to part with the stack. Upon the stack of beans being offered, there was a change of tactics, and the biddings were in the shortest possible time run up to the amount of the demand, £70. Mr. Medcalf (the eventual purchaser) advancing £5 upon his own bid, and on being reminded of the fact by the auctioneer, replying that it did not matter. At the conclusion of the sale the auctioneer had to endure a cross-fire of questions in reference to tithes. The plea having been advanced that no abatement could be properly made, as the tithe rent-charge was often in the hands of a layman, Mr. Wingfield objected, "Did not you tell me the other day that it was for the salvation of souls? To this I replied that it was a scandalous thing to draw money out of the tenant farmers in this neighbourhood for the benefit of persons in another part of the country; whereupon you said, They have souls to save as well as you farmers." The auctioneer having re-affirmed that proposition was met with the rejoinder from Mr. Medcalf, "Then let them do so at their own expense, and not ours." To which Mr. Wingfield added, "The worst of it is that the Commissioners will not keep religion out of the matter." There was a general expression of opinion that unless there was a fair re-adjustment of tithe, the auctioneer would have to pay several visits to the locality, and Mr. Weeks urged that the best thing for the farmers to do was to unite as they did years ago, when they refused to pay the church rates, he having himself allowed his goods to be seized rather than pay them, adding an expression of opinion, which was heartily cheered, that if the farmers of past days had not been thorough-going Tories they would have fought this battle long ago. The auctioneer and his clerks drove off amid loud groans for the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, and the ownership of the rick purchased by auction was restored to Mr. Wingfield, some of the neighbouring farmers undertaking to share with him in the loss he has sustained by the stand made against a system, as to the injustice of which there is a common sentiment at present very acutely quickened. It is evident that this incident is not to be the last of which we are likely to hear in respect to the tithe rent-charge.

Correspondence.

BISHOP RYLE AND NONCONFORMITY.

To the Editor of the Nonconformist and Independent.

SIR.—The "downright ignorance" in which Bishop Ryle finds the explanation of so much Dissent would certainly be a matter for regret, if and so far as it existed; but whether its removal would be for the advantage of Dr. Ryle's cause I venture to doubt. I am a Dissenter who has watched the internal history of the Church of England for five-and-forty years. I heard Newman at St. Mary's and Pusey at Christ Church while the Tractarian controversy was in progress, reading the best publications on each side; I saw Dr. Wilberforce come into his first diocese, and watched that most remarkable operation, the formation by that able man of the High Church Evangelical school of preachers which has taken the place which Bishop Ryle and his friends looked to occupy. I have read the judgments in the Gorham case, in that of the "Essays and Reviews," and in that of Mr. Bennett, and the result is a conviction that Dissent from the Church of England is even more, and far more, necessary than it was forty years ago, and Dr. Ryle must think us ignorant indeed to pretend the contrary.

Suppose, however, we were tired of our ecclesiastical position, what has Dr. Ryle to offer us? Renouncing Nonconformity, what are we to conform to? It is in vain to say "to the Church of England." As a consolidated system of interests partly lay, but chiefly clerical, no doubt the Church of England is a vast and powerful organisation. But as a witness to faith and a guide of life, the Church of England is a name and nothing more. Its three sections do not complement one another, as was fondly said at Leicester; two of them, High Church and Low Church, flagrantly contradict one another, teaching, as an eminent Church journalist has lately and justly said, two mutually exclusive ways of salvation; while the Broad section denies the doctrines of each of the others. And, after all, the High Churchman knows that he has the Prayer-book on his side, and Dr. Ryle knows that, although it may suit a clever Prime Minister to make him Bishop of Liverpool, he and his party have only a tolerated position in a Church, the plain meaning of whose formularies is against him. There is, then, no settled and generally-accepted system for any one to conform to.

It will be time enough for Churchmen to tell us that we do not understand their system when they show that they understand it themselves. When a plain, simple-minded Churchman ventures with me upon a suggestion like that of Dr. Ryle, I put a few questions to him on the Prayer-book. "Which of the collects do you like best? What does your Church teach concerning the power of the keys? How do you understand the declaration of the priest as to the condition of the infant he has just baptized?" and so on. In nine cases out of ten, I find that my Church friends have no opinion at all on these matters; that their knowledge is just such as may be picked up at morning and evening prayer, and that they do not think the services and creeds of their Church worth the expenditure of any thought. Last week I was staying at a house in the country, where the company numbered several Churchmen, either members of the learned professions or connected with the landed interest. Having had occasion to mention my objection to the claim of the Church to confer upon its ministers power to forgive sin, I was told by them all, and with as much sincerity as kindness, that I was under a complete misapprehension, and they referred me to the terms of the form of "absolution" which is read in Church every Sunday to show that the absolution in question was merely declaratory and general. When I took the Prayer-book and read to them from the "Form and Manner of Ordering of Priests" the words which the Bishop says to the deacon on whose head his hand rests, "Receive the Holy Ghost . . . Whose sins thou dost forgive they are forgiven, and whose sins thou dost retain they are retained," and further from the "Order for the Visitation of the Sick" the words of the priest to the sick person, "And by His authority committed unto me, I absolve thee from all thy sins," they were astonished. But after a little time taken for reflection, some said that as the words did not occur in the public service the laity had nothing to do with them; others that while they wished that the words were not there, they had no doubt that they could be explained. Nobody seemed to see that their significance lay in the warrant they give to the pretensions of that priestly party which is already dominant in the Established Church.

Do you not think, Sir, that in Bishop Ryle's language a just rebuke is implied? Have we not been to blame for leaving it possible for that prelate to suppose that we do not understand the system which he is ready to abet? Where are our popular tracts, suited to the circumstances and needs of the times? We are fighting the battle of Religious Equality, and we do well; but I fear we are neglecting to enlighten the country, and especially the inhabitants of the rural districts, as to the meaning of what is going on in their churches. I commend this suggestion to those who direct our policy in these matters, and remain, Sir, yours, &c.,

AN OLD CONGREGATIONALIST.

October 18th.

THE SENATUS ACADEMICUS.

To the Editor of the Nonconformist and Independent.

SIR.—May I ask for a portion of your valuable space in which to make explanations touching my relation to the *Senatus Academicus*? I have hitherto refrained from troubling the public with this matter, and should still have refrained, had I not discovered, during the

recent meetings of the Union at Birmingham, that a very mistaken, not to say absurd, account is being given of the reasons of the course I have taken. No one could have welcomed with greater cordiality the establishment of the *Senatus* than myself; and I was prepared heartily to co-operate in carrying out what I supposed to be its design of raising the standard at once of tutorial efficiency and student acquirements.

At the very first meeting (in 1879) three chief points of principle were raised by myself and others:—First, that of the scope of the examinations; secondly, that of the constitution of the examining body; thirdly, that of text-books. The discussion of the first was postponed to the next meeting, on the ground that it was exceedingly desirable to make a beginning in 1880, and that if a beginning were to be made then, we must content ourselves with such an examination as was possible at a year's notice. As to the second point, the majority took the view that the proper persons to conduct the examinations were members of the tutorial body. As to the third point, it was agreed that text-books should not be prescribed. Fully expecting that the first point would be fairly considered at the next meetings, and that the arrangement come to with regard to text-books would continue to be observed, I waived my strong objections to the proposed constitution of the examining body, and consented to become one of the examiners in systematic theology. But what happened? The majority refused even to consider the question as to the scope of future examinations, and practically set up the first one as a precedent. Subsequently, too, it was resolved to prescribe text-books in systematic theology and philosophy, and though in the matter of the Examining Board slight concessions have been made, as yet the *Senatus* has not recognised what I feel sure impartial judges will allow to be the only correct and wholesome principle. Had I anticipated such an issue I should certainly have declined co-operation from the very first, and thus saved myself both time and worry.

But now, it will be asked, what is it you want? This I will endeavour to state as briefly as possible, avoiding avoidable details.

First, as to the *Scope of the Examinations*. In my judgment the examinations ought to relate to the whole ground which an industrious and fairly able student may be expected to cover during two-and-a-half years of his theological course. (I speak of two-and-a-half and not of three years, the usual duration of the theological course, because the last four or six months are apt to be very broken.) I venture to appeal to the judgment of either laymen or ministers whether this be expecting too much from men who are to be stamped as having, to use the expression of the Prospectus of the *Senatus*, a "competent knowledge" of theology. What, now, does the *Senatus* require? Let us take, not 1880 and 1881, for whose shortcomings excuses may be pleaded, but 1882. In systematic theology the "competent knowledge" signifies "The Biblical and systematic doctrine of sin;" in Old Testament Exegesis, eighteen chapters of *Isaiah*; in New Testament Exegesis, the Epistle to the Hebrews; and in ecclesiastical history, "The Life and Theology of Luther." I will not refer to philosophy, as in that department there are alternative subjects. This examination embraces little, if any, more than the work that ought to be accomplished in one college year; and yet to pass it is to secure for a student the stamp "competent." I am perfectly aware a good examiner can find out by an examination, say, in even one chapter of *Isaiah*, and one of the *Hebrews*, whether a man knows Hebrew and Greek? Yes, easily enough. But it is a question of exegesis, including the history and theology of the Bible, and not merely of philology. The bane of too much of the so-called exegesis is, that whilst it may open up the grammar, practically it veils the life and soul of Scripture. A pretty guarantee these examinations will furnish of a student's knowledge of the Bible if this is to be their compass. No wonder that the acquaintance with Scripture and the interest in it among us should, as is complained, be slight, if this be the standard of a "competent knowledge" of Old and New Testament Exegesis. Similar remarks might be made about the other two subjects. In my humble opinion the churches have a right to expect, and it is their duty to see, that our students quit the colleges with a fair, all-round (not a profound) acquaintance with the great loci or sections of systematic theology, with the characteristic parts of the Old and New Testaments, including a connected view of their history and theology, and with the chief periods in the history of the Church and its doctrine. An examination of this range will offer some guarantee of such theological competency as a student can attain; whereas the present examination is fitted to perpetuate the fragmentariness which has heretofore too frequently characterised the theological attainments of our ministry, and, considered as a test of the knowledge our ministers should start with, is simply delusive.

With regard to the second point, that of the Examiners, the view I, for one, urged from the first was that the Examining Board should consist half of gentlemen who have no official connection whatever with the colleges, and half of members of the tutorial body—the latter to assist in drawing up the questions with a view to securing their relevancy, the former to appraise the results.

As to the third point, that of Text-books, my position is, Prescribe subjects, not books. The result of prescribing books will be to introduce uniformity, just where variety ought to be fostered. I have been assured, indeed, that the books mentioned in connection with systematic theology are merely suggested for the guidance of the students, not as the actual subjects of examination. But if so, why mention them at all? Are the tutors so ignorant as not to know what books to recommend to their students? Experience will show here, as it has shown elsewhere, that men who are more

ambitious of a place in the Senatus list than of a knowledge of theology generally will devote predominant attention to the books prescribed by the examiner. I am, yours faithfully,

Birmingham, Oct. 17, 1880. D. W. SIMON.

DISCUSSION IN THE CONGREGATIONAL UNION.

To the Editor of the *Nonconformist and Independent*.

SIR.—I will not complain of Dr. Allon's interruption of my speech last Thursday morning. Everybody will assume that his mature judgment is wiser than mine. But if he, or any one else, supposes that my object was simply to throw dirt at the Methodist body, they are very much mistaken. My object was to show that in certain districts our churches had to contend not only against no religion at all, and against the sacerdotal form of it taught by a section of the clergy of the Establishment, but also against what I venture to think is worse—namely, a spurious religion which allows its professors to lead immoral lives without rebuke or reprobation. There were men in the assembly who could have substantiated my statements. Surely this is a matter very closely affecting "the state of the country in regard to religion." Yet the assembly raised the cry of "question" when I was discussing it. Just as they did on Tuesday morning when Mr. Roberts, of Holloway, was delivering one of the best and most pertinent speeches made in the assembly.

Are not the meetings of this Union intended to elicit discussion from all parties, representing different shades of opinion, and not merely to hear eloquent speeches from a few of our leading men? And may it not be necessary sometimes to listen to "hard words," even as "hard" as those I spoke on Thursday morning?

Yours truly,

Louth, Oct. 19, 1880.

F. J. GRAY.

DESERTED FARMS.

To the Editor of the *Nonconformist and Independent*.

SIR.—In the *Daily News* of Monday there appeared an article on "Deserted Farms," and this article from "A Correspondent" was followed by a leader on the same subject. The facts brought to light by both writers show a melancholy state of things in the agricultural districts of our country. In some cases, farms, situated in fertile regions, have, for want of occupiers or cultivators, become a wilderness of thorns, briars, thistles, and other noxious weeds, with not a horse, cow, sheep, or even a barn-fowl to be seen on them. And this because landlords have not been able to get tenants to take their farms, though offered at a much reduced rent, and in some cases almost for nothing.

It is no business of mine to discuss the general causes of this agricultural depression, nor to suggest remedies for it. That I leave to others who have more knowledge of the facts and more wisdom to deal with them.

But, Sir, I cannot read such articles without being reminded of facts which your pages have often recorded within the last ten years—namely, that many a good and godly man was being dismissed from the farm which he had cultivated for years, and his ancestors for generations before him, for no other reason than that he was a Nonconformist, and liked the chapel better than the church.

As the farmer and his family were the mainstay of the little cause of the village chapel, it was thought, by Tory landlords and bigoted clergymen, that to get him out of the parish, and refuse to let any but a Churchman come in his place, would be to strike a deadly blow at Dissent; and so the Nonconformist farmer had notice to quit, and in many cases was obliged to go.

Now, Sir, it would be very interesting, and might be useful for more purposes than one, if we could ascertain how many of the farms thus vacated are now to be found in the class so graphically described in the *Daily News*.

Many of our friends in the rural districts may be acquainted with such cases. If they would report them to you, and you would record them in your pages, we may possibly find out that many an honest and industrious man is now labouring in America, Canada, New Zealand, or Australia who would have been here to prevent the desolation now reigning in deserted farms, if a despotic landlord had not been foolish enough to drive him away, by invading the rights of conscience. Of course, the said landlords have found out to their cost by this time, that this way of "harrying Dissent out of the land" has been a desperately losing game for themselves; but one of the commonest characteristics of Toryism is that it "cannot see afar off," and despotism is almost sure, sooner or later, to turn its own sword upon itself.

October 19, 1880.

A CAUTION.

To the Editor of the *Nonconformist and Independent*.

SIR.—Will you kindly allow me, through you, to put my brother ministers on their guard against a man who is going about the country and falsely using my name? He is about 5ft. 6in. high, with sandy hair and beard, has a strong Irish accent, walks sometimes a little lame, and is dressed like a gentleman. I heard of him last at Rochester. His story is that he is a member of my church whom I know well, and begs help to pay his fare home. He gives the name of Douglas, and an address in the east of London, which is false. I should feel obliged if any one whom he visits will hand him over to the care of the police.

Yours, &c., D. M. JENKINS.
50, Grove-road, Bow, E., Oct. 18, 1880.

A FRENCH VAGRANT.—A WARNING.

To the Editor of the *Nonconformist and Independent*.

SIR.—Allow me to warn your readers, especially in the North of England, against a Frenchman who is going about, begging, and making use of my name. Far from being authorised to do this, he is a man for whom I have the profoundest contempt. Any help given him will be utterly thrown away. His name is Bronard.

I am yours, &c., R. S. ASHTON.

13, Bloomsbury-street, London-Wall E.C.

Literature.

JOHNNY LUDLOW.*

MRS. HENRY WOOD has at length openly avowed herself the author of these most exquisite studies—for they are studies rather than stories, in the strict sense—which have, for several years past, been appearing at short intervals in the *Argosy* magazine. There they have formed centre of wonderful attraction; for, like all productions in which simplicity and truth predominate, they have appealed to cultured and uncultured alike; and, with their naive and unaffected revelations of human character and motive, their fresh descriptions, piquant humour, and affecting pathos, strengthened by vivid contrast with the realistic tone throughout, they have by common consent won such praise as would have made a reputation for a new writer. In one sense it was unfortunate for some of the reviewers themselves, that the praise of these stories was pitched so high, for it had in too many quarters become a habit, a hackneyed parrot-cry of criticism, to load the tales of Mrs. Henry Wood with every term of cold disparagement that lies in the reviewer's vocabulary. Mrs. Henry Wood wrote "Johnny Ludlow," and justified herself against them in the most efficient way; and has the merit of putting to shame her flock of sheep-like critics by "writing well" on their own voluntary confession. We may claim some credit to ourselves for having, both in regard to the "Johnny Ludlow" tales and others which appeared nearly at the same time or contemporaneously, continuously spoken in no spirit of undue disparagement, nor of undue or unguarded elation. Very suitable and characteristic is Mrs. Wood's preface to this second series. She says:—

Some speculation has existed as to who is the writer of the papers purporting to be by Johnny Ludlow, and more than one individual has come forward, claiming to be their author. In answer to this and to divers suppositions, I think the time has come for me to state that they are written by myself. When I began the stories for the *Argosy Magazine*, my only motive for not putting my name to them was that they appeared to be told by a boy, and to append my name as author would have destroyed the illusion, or, at least, have clashed with it. Many of my friends, the publishers, printers, &c., have known from the first who wrote "Johnny Ludlow." And now, having said this much, it only remains for me to thank the public, as I do sincerely and heartily, for the very great favour they have accorded to these simple and unpretending stories.

This second series is in every respect equal to the first. For one thing, there is more variety in the stories. They touch a wider and more varied range of life and character. Some have more of evident invention and are more ambitious with regard to artistic ends than any in the former set. Especially does this apply to the story which opens the second volume, and which for real and unpretending power, is one of the very ablest pieces of writing which have yet come from Mrs. Henry Wood's hand. "A Tale of Sin" is striking for the central idea, a very original one, which the reader must discover for himself in the most efficient manner; but it is also striking for the method in which it is wrought out, and for the masterly way in which the characters of Mary Layne and Lady Chavasse are developed. We are not only made to know the latter, we see her and realise her presence, and feel for her in midst of her awful trials. And, in spite of the temptation to prove false to her dramatic medium in treating such a theme, Mrs. Wood keeps very closely to it. Johnny Ludlow is here too, unmistakably revealing himself and maintaining his identity by little touches, by casual expressions, and, as we may say, by "the turn of the whole." Such little sketches as "A Day of Pleasure," "The Other Earring," "Lost in the Post," and "A Life of Trouble" need not be presumed to have cost Mrs. Henry Wood much trouble after she had once got into the habit of realising the person of Johnny Ludlow as she wrote; but it is very different in the case of such studies as those of Margaret Rymer, which is really one of the finest character-studies we have recently read; while for quaint observation and fun and pathos cunningly interblended very few things could surpass the chapter headed "Charles Van Rheyn," in which a very queer figure is made not only interesting, but truly touching and beautiful in such a way as can only be achieved through the pure prerogatives of art. "The Syllabus Feast" and "Seen in the Moonlight" are also in their particular ways excellent, and so certainly is "Hester Reed's Pills." The style and the strain of the book do not make it yield itself readily to extract; but we shall present one passage which shows rare power in describing Mary Layne's reattainment of her old position, and of the manner in which she drew aid and comfort from the trial and suffering she had undergone:—

"I wish you could have lived, Jeoffrey!" she cried from between her blinding tears. "I have wished it also," he answered, his tone full of pain. "But it was not to be when the days shall come that my mother is alone, save for Lady Rachel, and grieving for me, I want you to promise that you will sometimes see her, and give her consolation. Something tells me that you can do this, Mary; that she will take it from you, and I know that she will need it sadly. Be kind to her when I am gone."

"Yes, I promise it."

"You are the bravest of us all, Mary. And yet upon you has lain the greatest suffering!"

"It is the suffering that has made me brave," she answered. "Oh, Jeoffrey, I am getting to realise the truth that it is better to have too much of suffering in this world than too little. It is a hard truth to learn, but, once learned, it brings happiness and enduring."

Sir Jeoffrey nodded assent. He had learned somewhat of it, also—too late.

"I have begun a confidential letter to Colonel Layne,

Mary, and shall post it before I die, to thank him for—
the words were drowned in a gleeful commotion caused by the entrance of Arthur. The boy came dashing in from his afternoon study with the curate, some books under his arm.

"I have not been good, Aunt Mary. He said I gave him no end of trouble, and I am afraid I did; but, you see, I bought the marbles going along, instead of coming back as you told me, and—who's that?"

In letting his books fall on a sidetable, he had caught sight of the stranger, then standing up. The fire had burned low, and just for the moment even the young eyes did not recognise Sir Jeoffrey Chavasse. Mary stirred the fire into a blaze, and drew the crimson curtains before the window.

"What have you come for?" asked the little lad, as Sir Jeoffrey took his hand. "Are you any better, sir?"

"I shall never be better in this world, Arthur. And so you gave your tutor trouble this afternoon!"

"Yes; I am very sorry; I told him so. It was all through the marbles. I could not keep my hands out of my pockets. Just look what beauties they are!" Out came a handful of "beauties" of many colours. But Mary, who was standing by the mantel-piece, her face turned away, bade him put them up again. Arthur began to feel that there was some kind of hush upon the room. "I have been talking to Miss Layne about your future, for, do you know, Arthur, you are a favourite of mine," said Sir Jeoffrey. "Ever since the time when my horse knocked you down, and might have killed you—I have taken a very warm interest in your welfare. I have often wished that you—that you—" he seemed to hesitate in some emotion, "were my own little son and heir to succeed me; but of course that cannot be. I don't know what profession you may choose, or may be chosen for you."

"I should like to be a soldier," interrupted Arthur, lifting his sparkling eyes to Sir Jeoffrey's.

"Your ideas may change before the time for choosing shall come. But a soldier may be as brave a servant of God as of his Queen. Should you ever become a soldier, will you remember this truth?"

"Yes," said Arthur, in a whisper, for the grave tones and manner impressed him with some awe.

Sir Jeoffrey was sitting down and holding Arthur before him. To the latter's intense surprise he saw two tears standing on the wasted cheeks. It made him feel a sort of discomfort, and he began as a relief to play with the chain and seal that hung on the baronet's waistcoat—a transparent seal with a plain device on it.

"Should you like to have them when I am gone, Arthur, and wear them in remembrance of me when you are old enough? I think it must be so; no one can have a better right to them than my little friend who once nearly lost his arm by my carelessness. I will see about it. But I have a better present than that—which I shall give you now."

Taking from his pocket the small Bible which had been his companion for some months, he put it into Arthur's hands, telling him that he had written his name in it. And the child, turning hastily to the flyleaf, saw it there: "Arthur Layne, from G. G. A. C." Lower down were the words: "Come unto Me all ye that labour and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest."

ECCLESIASTICAL MISCELLANY.

BREAKFAST TO THE REV. JOSEPH COOK, OF BOSTON.—On Friday, on the invitation of Mr. G. Williams, the treasurer of the Christian Young Men's Association, a large and representative gathering of the leading ministers and laymen of London connected with Christian work in the metropolis breakfasted at the rooms of the institution in Aldersgate-street, in order to give a hearty welcome to the Rev. Joseph Cook, of Boston, who has come from America to deliver a course of lectures, chiefly on behalf of Christianity in this country, and which lectures are to be commenced in Scotland almost immediately. Amongst the company present were Dr. Stanton, Bishop of North Queensland; Alderman W. M'Arthur, M.P.; the Revs. Dr. Nolan, Dr. Wainwright, Dr. Donald Fraser, Dr. Dykes, Dr. Hugh Sinclair Paterson, Dr. Rigg, Dr. Davidson, Dr. Avolting, Newman Hall, James Spurgeon, W. Statham, and many more. After breakfast Mr. Williams expressed his pleasure at seeing such a large company present, and apologised for the absence of the Earl of Shaftesbury and the Hon. Hugh Kinnaird. Mr. Hodder read letters of regret at not being present from Dr. Angus and the Rev. Charles Spurgeon, the latter writing:—"I thank you for your kind invitation to breakfast with Mr. Cook. I think it an honour to have been invited and I should regard it as a great pleasure to accept the invitation to meet so distinguished and useful a teacher. But, alas! I am an invalid, and must be denied many of the joys of social life for a while. Permit me, however, to charge you with a message of grateful respect to Mr. Cook, for whose appearance at this juncture I have blessed God many times. Right heartily I hope that England may be favoured with some of those confirming words which have been so useful to the staggering and those confounding arguments which have scattered the designing, sceptical bands." Short congratulatory addresses were then delivered by the Bishop of North Queensland, Dr. Rigg, the Rev. W. Peplé, the Rev. W. Statham, the Rev. John Clifford, Dr. Hauptman (South Africa), and Alderman W. M'Arthur, M.P.; and then Mr. Cook spoke as to the way in which the Church was to meet the scepticism of the age. It was a work to be done more by lectures than in the pulpit. In America the sceptics were losing ground, and now every one in five was a Church member. The address was repeatedly cheered, and at the close the meeting was subsequently addressed by the Revs. Dr. Donald Fraser and Newman Hall.

DEATH OF THE OLDEST NONCONFORMIST MINISTER IN WALES.—By the death of the venerable and aged minister, the Rev. Edward Hughes, of Aberystwith, at the advanced age of 96, Wales has lost its oldest Nonconformist minister, he having been a minister in the Calvinistic Methodist Connexion for the long period of 75 years.

NONCONFORMISTS AND CONFORMISTS.—At the opening of the St. Albans Diocesan Conference on Thursday the Bishop of St. Albans, referring to the work before the gathering, said that no one could have observed the Church's Congress at Leicester without being struck with the expressed sympathy with the movement within the Church of the Nonconformist bodies. He urged upon Churchmen a candid admission of their shortcomings, and an agreement to unite in honest endeavour, forgetting all differences, in the work of faith and truth.

* Johnny Ludlow. Second Series. By Mrs. Henry Wood, Author of "East Lynne." In Three Vols. Richard Bentley and Son.

THE
CONGREGATIONAL UNION
OF
ENGLAND & WALES.

AUTUMNAL MEETINGS AT BIRMINGHAM.

[BY OUR SPECIAL REPORTERS.]

THIRD MORNING SESSION.

In our last number we reported, in full, the first and second sessions of the Congregational Union (Tuesday and Wednesday) at Birmingham. The third morning session was held on Thursday in Carr's-lane Chapel at 10 o'clock, under the presidency of the Chairman, Professor Newth, D.D.

The proceedings were commenced by a special devotional service (bearing on the subject of the morning's conference) in which the Rev. S. Pearson, the Rev. H. Arnold Thomas, and the Rev. Joshua C. Harrison took part.

A conference was held on the state of the country in regard to religion and the consequent duty of the churches. It was opened by

The Rev. ANDREW MEARNs, secretary of the London Congregational Union, who read the following paper on

THE RELIGIOUS STATISTICS OF LONDON.

We meet to-day for conference on the state of the country in regard to religion and the consequent duty of the churches, and I have been asked to deal with the religious statistics of London by way of introducing the conference. The usual time allowed for a paper is twenty minutes; but those to introduce this conference are to be (according to the programme) "short papers," so that I suppose we are hardly expected to occupy twenty minutes, and on no account would we be tolerated longer. To deal with London in the time requires that I simply state a few of the results of our inquiry and deal with it as a whole, without giving the details of the different districts.

What is London? In speaking of London we sometimes mean Smaller London and sometimes Greater London. To avoid confusion we should clearly understand what is meant by each. Smaller London comprises twenty-eight superintendent registrars' districts, twenty of them being in Middlesex, five in Surrey, and three in Kent. (The names are in the papers circulated.) This Smaller London had an estimated population last Midsummer of 3,664,149. Greater London comprises, in addition to the twenty-eight districts of Smaller London, other fourteen superintendent registrars' districts, six of them being in Middlesex, four in Surrey, two in Kent, and two in Essex. It comprises the whole of Middlesex and such parishes of Surrey, Kent, Essex, and Herts as are within twelve miles of Charing-cross. These additional districts had an estimated population of 955,503 at Midsummer last, so that Greater London has at the present time a population of 4,619,652. The population of the United Kingdom at the present time is estimated at 34,505,043. Greater London has, therefore, more than an eighth of the population of Great Britain and Ireland. The estimated population of England and Wales at the present time is 25,480,161, so that Greater London contains considerably more than a sixth of the entire population. It contains nearly a million more than Scotland.

This large population is constantly and rapidly increasing, the estimated increase last year being 85,612. It is important to note that the increase is not equal in all parts. The population is decreasing within the City; within Smaller London it goes on increasing, but at a decreasing rate; and in the outer ring the population increases steadily, and at an increasing rate. The population of the outer ring has increased more than 50 per cent. in the last ten years.

It is estimated that 58 per cent. of the population might attend religious service at one time, and so the provision of religious accommodation should not fall short of this. The actual provision in Smaller London is 1,135,937, but it should be 2,125,206, so that there is an existing deficiency of 989,269. This reckons the excess of sittings in the city as available for other districts, but they cannot be so used to any extent, so that the real present deficiency in Smaller London alone is 1,011,571.

The details upon which these statements are based have been preserved, so that the results can easily be verified. The information has been taken from the best sources at command, and no effort has been spared to ensure accuracy and completeness. In every case where the information could not be obtained from an official return, and was refused by those on the spot, it has been ascertained by a visit to the place. The tables I have printed and circulated all deal

with Smaller London. They give particulars which I think will amply repay your careful study.

We are unable to give so much information with regard to the districts in the outer ring which go to make up Greater London, but the returns are so near completion, that we may estimate the accommodation provided at 283,680. The population is 955,503, and requires provision to be made for 554,191, so that there is a deficiency of accommodation in these outer districts of 270,511, and this added to the deficiency of Smaller London, shows the deficiency in Greater London to be at the present time 1,282,082. The population of the borough of Birmingham was estimated last Midsummer at 394,738, less than a third of those who should be in attendance in London, but for whom no place is provided.

It will be seen from the tables before you that Congregationalists stand next to the Church of England in London, providing nearly an eighth of the whole religious accommodation. Estimating our responsibility as Congregationalists by our present strength to do our share in meeting the present deficiency, we should provide at once at least 160 new places of worship, each capable of accommodating 1,000 persons, and to do our share in providing for the wants of the new population we should build every year in London six new churches capable of containing 1,000 each. Taking the Year Book of 1866, and comparing it with that of 1880, there are now 26 more Congregational churches than at the former date—an increase of less than two churches per annum. The efforts of all Christians combined in London have only led to an increase of accommodation less than half what is required by the increase of population alone, so that every year our condition is becoming worse.

We are not surprised that the deficiency in London is greater than anywhere else. The larger the population the greater the deficiency everywhere. What is to be done with our large centres of population? Our wealthy men remove from these centres into the country, and the money expended by them for religious objects is usually spent where their homes are situated, too often forgetting the city where the wealth was made and the multitudes that must reside where the daily toil is carried on. Whilst we do what we can to press home the claims on such friends we must not forget that the call is for the combined efforts of all the churches, and that Congregational churches should not be behind in doing their share to relieve the deplorable deficiency.

Attendance.—It is essential to know how much of the accommodation is actually used if we would arrive at any definite conclusion as to the state of London in regard to religion. The religious census of 1851 gave the attendance on Sunday, 30th March. I was hoping for a repetition of that census next year, but it is not to be. It would be very important to be able to state the actual attendance on some given Sunday, but it should be taken without making the particular Sunday known previously. In 1851 it was found that less than half the accommodation provided was used at any one time. The estimate of the number of separate persons at one or other of the services was equal to two-thirds the accommodation provided. Taking this estimate, it would show an actual average attendance of 946,412 separate persons at one or more services each Sunday. The number able to attend at some time of the day is 70 per cent. (58 per cent. might attend alone if they would). At 70 per cent. 3,233,756 might attend at one or other of the services. Deducting the estimated number of separate persons actually present at some service, it leaves 2,287,344 who could attend religious worship once, at least, who at present neglect to do so, a population more than five times—nearly six times—that of Birmingham.

In some districts the attendance is much worse than in others. In the spring of last year the *Church Times* published statistics of the churches in Bethnal-green connected with the Church of England. There are 15 such churches, providing accommodation for 14,478, and on the particular Sunday when the attendance was reckoned there were 905 present, the largest congregation being 150, and that church was capable of holding 1,500. From other statistics that appeared in the *Nonconformist* it would appear that at the same time there was an attendance of over 5,000 in the Free Churches; but what is this to a population of over 130,000? In July of last year Dr. Kennedy collected statistics of the attendance in St. George's-in-the-East and Shadwell. In one church there were 9 persons, in another 15. Altogether there were in attendance 3,735, not 15 per cent. of the population.

These figures, I trust, may enable you to form some notion of the state of London to-day. So far they may help us to some idea of the religious state of London. Outward action is, after all, no bad test of a man's religious state. There may be much display without any corresponding inward feeling, but the heart cannot be right without the outward manifestations. Men, under the power of religion, would not be without the means of outward worship, and would not neglect these means when provided.

It is worthy of our consideration that the increase of late years has been mainly where local bodies have first acted, and there are many reasons to be urged why it should be

so; but we must not forget that in this way the increase is mainly for those who already appreciate religious ordinances, and are able and disposed to support them. At the same time we are leaving districts, where the artisans and labourers dwell, unprovided. Home missionary enterprise has a very large field in London. There is no hope of increase in some districts, but as the result of action from without.

It is no part of my business this morning to inquire into the causes that have led to the present state of affairs, nor to suggest how it may be remedied. My paper is to be descriptive, statistical, and short. I have tried to make it all three.

Let me say that the Christian churches of London are equal to the task, if only fully awakened to a sense of their duty. The means, though latent, are at hand. Churches and church members do not yet fully realise the imperative necessity of the work, and the immense responsibility that devolves on them in regard to it. The call is assuredly for zeal and courage, enterprise and liberality, and there is no time to be lost. Speak unto the children of Israel, that they go forward. While we cease not to pray, Awake, awake, O arm of the Lord, let us hear the voice from heaven. Awake, awake, put on Thy strength, O Zion.

RELIGIOUS STATISTICS OF LANCASHIRE.

The Rev. E. ARMITAGE, of Waterhead, near Oldham, read a paper on the "Religious Statistics of Lancashire." He said: When Mr. Mearns recently produced his pamphlet of London statistics, and thereby produced a sensation at the same time throughout both London and the provinces, the committee cast about for some persons who would be willing to gather figures in other parts of the country that might be laid alongside his at this meeting. They dropped on me as a man of notoriously few duties and idle habits, and prescribed Lancashire. Since that time, however meagre these few pages may seem to you, my duties have been multiplied and my habits modified. I regard these duties however, as now ended, and do not include in them any speech here this evening. Experience has taught me that this reverend assembly is most interested when it is amused, and it is a fortunate thing, therefore, for us all that I am not required to discourse upon these figures. And there is another reason why I shall conceal my thoughts about them in a golden silence, and it is that I should have even less confidence in any remarks that I might make about them than you might be kind and polite enough to put. For so convinced am I of the truth which Mr. Conder referred to in his sermon, that the only home of certainty is in the inferences for *a priori* axioms, and that as soon as you come to deal with facts you come to deal with fiction too, that I shall not amuse myself with drawing conclusions from these figures. Every figure in tables of religious statistics like these is capable of many explanations, and until those explanations are given by wise men, nothing worth hearing is to be said. In the absence of such explanations statistical tables simply furnish a field for an unfettered imagination, and thus is the paradox of our preacher of Monday vindicated: The sphere of fact is the true sphere of authority. Positivism hath no place! Having said thus much, I shall, perhaps, do well at once to proceed to draw two or three inferences from my figures. They will, however, only be of an arithmetical kind, and my sole confidence in them arises from the hope that a mass of details, individually vicious, will produce a result which shall be sound, that though truth loses on each article, it may make something in the quantity. The municipal boroughs I am concerned with contain a population of one and a half millions, and I may just give you a brief summary table:—

SUMMARY TABLE.

Population.	1851.	1860.	P.c.of inc.
929,134	1,333,783	63	
1. Church of England.	133,531	185,630	39
2. Wesleyans	34,851	64,488	83
3. Congregationalists	30,468	50,959	67
4. Roman Catholics	23,830	48,798	90
5. Baptists	14,108	29,080	103
6. United Meth. F. C.	12,335	21,760	92
7. Presbyterians	14,810	22,290	57
8. Total of these and others	304,479	495,223	63

Percentage of population for which accommodation is provided

32.8	32.3
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as the population of these eight municipal boroughs has increased 65 per cent. (i.e. by about two-thirds) since 1851, and as the church accommodation has increased in about the same ratio, it is interesting to inquire whether all denominations have done their proportional share in this extension. They have not. The most remarkable growth that appears from these tables is that of the Baptists, who have increased their chapel accommodation by 106 per cent. The United Methodists come next with 92 per cent.; and then follows the Roman Catholics with 90 per cent. The Wesleyans provide 85 per cent., although if they had not so modestly stated their figures we should probably find their real growth to be nearer 160 per cent. Then comes a long drop to the Congregationalists with 67 per cent., and last of all we find the Church of England with 39 per cent. This rather slender performance of the Established Church is remarkable in view of the frequent assertions which we hear that the spiritual needs of our great centres of population can only be met by the resources of an Established Church.

RELIGIOUS CONDITION OF SUFFOLK.

The Rev. J. BROWNE, of Wrentham, read a paper on the State of the County of Suffolk in regard to Religion. He said: It is supposed that this county is fairly representative of the agricultural districts generally, and that if I succeed in giving a true representation of the state of religion in it, you will have, substantially, a picture of the religious state of agricultural England, and will be better prepared to consider the duty of the churches to these portions of our land. We must first get an idea of—

1. *The area and population of the county.* The county of Suffolk, then, extends over 1,500 square miles. The population in 1871 was 348,869, inhabiting about 22 towns and 1,000 villages and hamlets, excluding the urban population, i.e., the inhabitants of 14 towns whose population in each case is above 2,000 (urban population, 116,208). The rest of the inhabitants of the county, amounting to 232,661, are scattered over 910,000 acres, giving nearly 4 acres to each person—man, woman, and child. This will at once suggest one of our greatest difficulties, when endeavouring to bring the Gospel into contact with such numbers, so situated, viz., the scattered character of the population. We are still, Mr. Chairman, "the children of the dispersion." But it will at once be asked, Does not the Established Church make full provision for the attendance of this population on public worship? Is there not a church and a clergyman in almost every parish? My remarks in reply will be arranged thus—1. I propose to show the number of the clergy; 2. The accommodation supplied in the parish churches; 3. The cost of the provision for religious instruction in those parishes; 4. The results.

1. *Provision for Religious Worship by the Established Church.*—According to Knight's Handbook, published at the office of the Conservative county newspaper, there are 553 parishes having 464 incumbents and 113 curates. 577 clergymen are employed in ministering to the spiritual necessities of the county, containing a population one-third less than that of Birmingham. This gives to each clergyman, supposing there are no Dissenters in the county, an average cure of 604 souls, men, women, and children all counted. 359 parishes have each a population below 500; 123 parishes over 500 and below 1,000. There are 482 parishes, each with a population below 1,000; 42 between 1,000 and 2,000; 29 between 2,000 and 14,000; and only 71 parishes having each a population over 1,000 and below 14,000, and only one above 10,000. Some of the larger towns have several parishes included.

2. In order that every one who can attend public worship may have an opportunity of doing so, provision should be made for 58 per cent. of the whole population—i.e., there should be sittings in this county for 202,344 persons. But, according to the Diocesan Calendar, the churches in the whole county have sittings only for 143,759, showing a deficiency of 58,585 places. This number of persons could not go to church if they would.

3. The gross annual value of the benefices in the county as given by the same authority is £359,064. Adding at least one-tenth for the increased value of the tithe of late (£16,000), and adding further an average sum of £50 to each living for house, glebe, and surplus fees (£25,000), we have £200,064 as the yearly cost of ministering to these parishes, not including endowments for education, &c., nor property in the county belonging to Ecclesiastical Commissioners. 500 clergymen have been employed for 300 years at about this relative remuneration to educate and edify the inhabitants of the county. With what results?

4. *Results.*—In a series of ten maps issued by the Government in 1850, and coloured, if I may so say, in different shades of black, we find that Suffolk stands amongst the blackest for ignorance, it is about medium for criminality and dark for bastardy. But what can be said as to the quality of the teaching supplied? In the case of those who can go to church we learn authoritatively from the *Rock* newspaper, and we know from our own experience, that much of the teaching with which the people are familiar is of a doubtful character! How miserable, therefore, would be the state of the county if the Established Church alone ex-

Hence it appears that church accommodation has increased almost in the same ratio as the population (63 per cent. as against 65 per cent.), but that both in '51 and now it made provision for little more than 32 per cent. of the people, and so fell short of the standard requirements (58 per cent.) by nearly 26 per cent. or a fourth of the whole population. The provision is, therefore, very nearly as low as in London, where Mr. Mearns has calculated it to be 31.3 per cent., and is just about half what it is per thousand of the population in Derbyshire (where it is 64.2 per cent.). In these eight towns the Congregationalists provide 1-10th of the whole religious accommodation, and therefore in 1851, and ever since then, Congregationalists may be considered to be in arrears of chapel accommodation to an extent equal to 1-10th part of the entire population. Finally, inasmuch

isted in it! The deficiency of accommodation is 58,585, nearly three-tenths. The light in many places is darkness, and great is that darkness. It will not be fair to make this statement without giving some facts in support of it. In my own immediate neighbourhood I had, in connection with our county work, to ascertain the special state of a district that I might show the need of placing a colporteur there. Our agent visited thirty parishes, the aggregate population of which was 8,659. In these parishes there were not more than six clergymen whom we should call Evangelical; eight were Roman Catholic in tendency, three High Church, and of thirteen we preferred to say nothing definite. In only nine of these parishes were there schools, and of these seven were under Romish or High Church influence. (And here I remark that the Romish is the most active section of the Church in country villages, and its influence is greatly extending.) In only 13 of these parishes were there chapels or rooms for preaching (principally rooms), and occasional services in these were the only means of religious instruction employed outside the Establishment. When our colporteur got to work he reported that "in some places the simple story of the Cross seemed something new to the people; whilst in others the parishioners were taught to confess to the clergyman under the persuasion that he could put away their sins." Five years ago the colporteur in that district sold, among other books, some copies of the *British Workman*. A clergyman, going into the house where they were, saw and characterized them as "Dissenting trash," and promised to send some suitable reading. He sent seven numbers of the *Penny Post*, a magazine of a strongly ritualistic character. It has stories of a conventional kind, visions, allegories, Romish histories, and monkish legends. Thomas à Becket comes before us in all the odour of sanctity, and we have many specimens of what is considered healthy nourishment for the rural population. Questions and answers about yew trees in churchyards, the meaning of priestly vestments, the proper manner of placing the finger and thumb of the priest when giving the benediction, &c. [Mr. Browne read two extracts—one relating to a legend of the cross, and the second on the origin of blackberries, and continued:—] This cannot be called Dissenting trash. (Laughter.) I did not know there was such a magazine, but it has been issued monthly for thirty years, from James Parker and Co., 377, Strand. In the western division of the county, too, in many parishes the light is excluded. I remember the late Mr. Manning Prentice, in his opening address at one of the public meetings in connection with our Union, said: "When I tell you that a little while ago two of us spent a long day in visiting from house to house in villages where people cannot even hold a prayer meeting in their houses if they would, and went through a district eight miles long and four miles wide, where such a state of things exists, you will see that it is needed; indeed, that some should go and strengthen the hands and encourage the hearts of those who work in the Lord's cause." And only this year one of our colporteurs, when leaving his district because of discouragements, mentioned it as a fact that when he visited some who had formerly attended his services, but had recently absented themselves, they told him they dared not go to chapel! But what, under these circumstances, are the freechurches doing in the county? They are comparatively few, and, in many cases, feeble, most of them have a struggle to live, but during the present century they have attempted to do some work for God and their country. But before I speak of what they have been enabled to do, I will try to put before you one great cause of the feebleness of those churches, and I will speak of my own experience. Of the members added to our churches, the most enterprising and promising generally leave us for the larger towns. Out of 100 added to my own church—born and trained amongst us—one is a minister in the midlands, one is a tutor at Homerton College, one is a matron of one of Mr. Spurgeon's orphan houses, one is a teacher at Milton Mount, two are teachers at Walthamstow Mission School, two are chapel-keepers in metropolitan churches, and many are occupying less public places and doing good work in churches in various parts of the kingdom. We should have been glad to retain these members, and to avail ourselves of their aid in carrying on our work, but the place was too strait for them; it would not afford them a livelihood, and we have, so far, lost them. For thirty-two years we have been experiencing this constant drain upon our strength. I have endeavoured to put a bold face upon it, and to appear not to be discouraged, but it has often produced a sickness of heart which I cannot describe. But notwithstanding all difficulties and discouragements, our own denomination has maintained about forty-five or forty-six churches in the county; of these one-third are more or less helped pecuniarily by the County Union—i.e., by the Church-Aid Society; another third barely maintain their pecuniary independence, but this in many cases is done at the expense of their ministers; the remaining third may be supposed to sustain their own organisations and to contribute most largely to support the stations and agencies connected with the

County Union. We have had to resort to colportage in the hope that this kind of work would prove of service to us, but we have not found it a great success. Perhaps we did not get the right men, but the difficulty is here. Our union paid £40 annually to the society in London to send us down a colporteur. He soon supplied his district with books, the inhabitants did not care to buy more, or could not afford to do so. The society wanted sales; to secure them the agent's long journeys became longer, and when at length the villages afforded him no encouragement, he was driven into the towns where he was not wanted, and so taken off from the work for which we had specially engaged him. Here it will be seen that the scattered character of the population, in addition to their poverty and want of reading taste, have caused failure. But we have not neglected other evangelistic agencies.

The free churches in the county provide sittings for 101,452 persons—i.e., for more than one-half the whole number required. And as chapels cannot be built, having services maintained in them, without congregations to support them, and as we may conclude that the chapels which exist are used at least in as great a proportion as the churches themselves, and as we have not taken into our calculation any of the schools and rooms used for week-evening services, nor any of the rooms and cottages in which services are held on Sunday, we may safely conclude that the Free Churches have a hold upon well-nigh one-half of the worshipping population in the county. From particular inquiries I have made I find that seat accommodation provided by Congregationalists is 30,960; Baptists, 30,320; Wesleyans, 13,761; Primitives, 12,951; others, 13,460; together, 101,452. This added to the Church accommodation, 143,759, gives a superabundance to the amount of 42,887. But the aggregate number of sittings provided by all denominations whatever, is no exact measure of the available provision made to supply the spiritual necessities of the population. If the religious teaching in all cases was satisfactory, some districts would of course, under present arrangements, be more than sufficiently supplied, whilst others would be but partially cared for. There are but few districts of which it can be said that the provision is satisfactory; but there are many where the inhabitants are yet in darkness and have no light. In some places the unendowed denominations stand in each other's way; too many places of worship injure each other, and there is a waste of labour in supplying these pulpits, which might be wisely economised by amalgamating the congregations, and employing some of the preachers elsewhere. In other districts there are too many small churches calling themselves independent, which do not maintain themselves. They must have a minister to themselves, and they do not decently support him, and they come to our Union for assistance. These churches, in many cases, are no strength to the denomination, but a source of weakness, and the time seems to be coming when the Unions in sparsely-populated districts must change their policy in respect of such churches. If by mutual arrangement the several denominations would act on the plan adopted by our missionary societies, and divide the country districts between them, and if in each district a convenient centre was chosen, and the whole district placed under the charge of an efficient pastor, with a good staff of assistants—some wholly devoted to the ministry, and working as itinerants, removable after two or three years to other spheres, the others local preachers,—I say if this were done, the sum now granted to shore up weak churches would suffice to carry on this more efficient plan, and we should thus secure the advantages of both the Congregational and Wesleyan systems. Our average churches are not strong enough generally to initiate such a scheme. In one district, Hadleigh, it is partially adopted, with great success. They want strengthening first, and it would be good policy so to assist them as to enable them to undertake this work. I have given these facts; I leave it with the brethren here to extract their full meaning, and to say how they ought to influence us. I conclude by saying that it ought not to be impossible to devise a scheme which should conserve our Congregationalism, and yet make it an efficient agency in the agricultural districts.

THE DISCUSSION.

Mr. F. J. GRAY (Louth) said that the county from which he came (Lincolnshire) was overrun by the Church of England, but still more actively by Methodism. The religious aspect of Methodism, however, in that county was far from creditable to any religion or any religious community. What was the use of having revival services and "after-meetings" at which men were found directing supposed inquirers, who were to be seen the next morning in the dram-shop? ("Question.") What was the use of having Sunday-schools where the superintendents were notoriously liars? ("Question.")

The Rev. Dr. ALLON rose to order, and protested against charges being made which could not possibly be proved so as to justify any generalisation. They had enough defects amongst themselves without indulging in as-

persions on other religious bodies. (Applause.)

Mr. F. J. GRAY said he willingly bowed to Dr. Allon's suggestion. He maintained that there was great need for further efforts of the Congregational body in the county of Lincolnshire. Many churches were struggling and languishing for want of the right man in the right place. It should be remembered that the church did not exist for the minister or for the minister's family, but that the minister existed for the church, and he felt sure that no right-minded minister would stay in the church when he knew that there was considerable disaffection in it. ("Question.") He hoped that everything would be done to keep up the standard of the ministry, and he believed that the Congregational body had a glorious work in the future.

The Rev. C. E. BAINES REED, M.A.: I ask leave to say a few words supplementary to the paper that has been read by Mr. Mearns. It seems to me that the gist of the statistics which he has prepared lies in the part which refers to the relative increase in the various denominations in London, so far as smaller London is concerned. There are two things which I think call for serious attention, and that I hope may be taken up by the senior members of the Union. One is that our increase between 1851 and 1880 has been less than the increase of any other denomination; and the other fact is that those who hold substantially the same views of Church government and of belief as ourselves, namely, our brethren the Baptists, should not be in the same position, but are at the top of the tree. That seems to indicate there is a defect in our organisation for Church extension in the London area from which our Baptist friends are free, and very likely they have some point about their organisation that we should do wisely to copy. One important question is, How new movements are to be initiated, and by whom? Formerly the initiation was left very much to individuals, to the wealthy members of separate churches, or persons of influence, generally pastors. There was always a difficulty in regard to funds, which was only partially met by the useful help of the two Chapel Building Societies. Then there was the fear that naturally arose, of weakening established causes by division. I think the formation of the London Congregational Union for the metropolitan area, and the development of the County Associations for other parts of the country, have very much tended to overcome these difficulties, and that we may have much more hope for Church extension in the future than we have had in the past. The London Congregational Union is always willing to assist so far as it can in purchasing sites, and helping towards the erection of churches where they are required. Then, as regards the other matter, it is a good thing to have a body at hand that can take larger views than a separate church can take, and that can with greater authority and greater information suggest where action is desirable. The London Congregational Union has information of what other denominations are doing, or are likely to do, and is able to take a great deal broader view than any single church would be likely to adopt; besides which it can better foresee the drift of the population, and judge where new churches are likely to be required. Of course the action of such a body must be wise and conceived in a conciliatory spirit, and it will be fatal to its usefulness, if there be any effort on its part to override the strong opinion of persons on the spot who have local knowledge not possessed by the officers of the Union. But if only its action be wise—as I am persuaded under its present arrangement it is, and will continue to be—it ought never to be resented, but rather to be gratefully accepted, and even sought by the churches that may be concerned. After all, do we not need a greater spirit of consecration on the part of our churches? Have we not need to apply to our churches the principle of ministering to others, which we all recognise as the rule of the Christian life? Has it not often been that our churches have thought that they lived to be ministered unto rather than themselves to minister? It is no easy thing for a church that is in a prosperous condition, or thinks that it is so, to propose to send out a swarm of members to form a new colony; it is not easy for those who go out to lose a beloved minister, and to put up with the tender mercies and supplies and all the inconveniences of establishing a new church; and it is not an agreeable thing for those who remain behind to feel that they are losing the strength which their brethren have given them in worship, and fellowship, and resource. At the same time we must remember that secessions are not to be universally condemned. (Hear, hear.) There is such a thing as a noble secession—a noble withdrawal of members from their privileges in order to provide in a missionary spirit for the wants of an outlying district. Is it not also true that it is possible for a church so to save its life that it shall lose it, and so to lose its life that it shall save it? As it was with Greece in the olden time, and as it is with Great Britain, that her strength lies very much in the self-propagating power of her sons and daughters, and the way in which they readily adapt themselves to new conditions in other parts of the world; so if we value our principles, and wish them to be shared by those around us, and inherited by the population that may

come after us, should we not try to cultivate in our churches this spirit of ministry and self-sacrifice? (Applause.)

Mr. W. BROWN (Braintree) said it should be remembered in reference to the statement in the Rev. J. Browne's paper respecting the value of benefices, that a good deal of money went to lay impropriators. In the neighbourhood in which he lived, the centre of Essex, the working clergy only got a third of the tithes, two-thirds going to the lay impropriators. The tithe question was one that affected the rural mind very greatly at the present day. Since the great struggle of the Farm Labourers' Union, there had been a great awakening in the minds of the people, and amongst many of them there was a revolt against all religion, because they saw that a large amount of money was paid in the name of religion of which they saw little or no result. There was a revolt even against the voluntary churches, and the labouring class were now beginning to do a noble work amongst themselves. They had been branded by the unfortunate name of the "peculiar people"; but a religious revival had taken place amongst them, the result of which was so manifest in their lives that the Churchmen themselves had told him that they wished all their labourers were "peculiar people." Episcopal churches were almost empty as far as farm labourers were concerned, and the few attendants were attracted by the charities administered by the rector or vicar and churchwardens. He believed that there was a great awakening in the public mind. During the summer he held a service in his barn, which was attended by 200 or 300 persons on Sunday evenings—(applause)—and such was their appreciation of good preaching that if they saw any one riding home with him who was able to speak, and understood what he was speaking about, there was always a good attendance; but if he had any one with him who could not acquit himself so well, the attendance was much smaller—a phenomenon that was not perhaps confined to rural districts. (Laughter.) He believed that the diminished attendance at places of worship was largely due to the spirit of inquiry prevailing amongst the people since the labourers' strike. If the rural districts were to be thoroughly evangelised, it could only be by personal devotion on the part of the ministers. There was not so much need of organisation as personal consecration and visitation from house to house. The voluntary denominations should band together to do away with some of the little churches. (Hear, hear.) A little boy of his own had recently said, "I don't think I shall become a minister." "Why not?" he was asked. "Why," said he, "because there are so many here now." (Laughter.) He knew a long straggling village with a parish church and a population of less 1,000, where there were three chapels—Primitive Methodist, Wesleyan, and Independent. That was a great loss of spiritual power. The denominations should follow the example of the missionary societies, and work together for the common good. (Hear, hear.)

The Rev. S. PEARSON, M.A., of Liverpool: The difficulty of overtaking the wants of the agricultural districts and town districts will, in my opinion, only be met by impressing this grave subject upon the conscience of our churches at large. There ought to be no distinction between the officers of churches and the members. I have listened to the papers this morning with deep interest: I am sure they have produced a profound impression upon this assembly, especially that with reference to the great wants of the London population. It strikes me that if we could produce a similar impression in our churches, we should go a long way towards a solution of the difficulties which lie before us. Sometimes the tendency of our churches is to consider themselves as

"Gardens walled around,
Chosen and made peculiar ground."

We have had to fight for our right to worship, and many of our churches in the last century were content to get the opportunity of worshipping and hearing the Gospel. It was not until the great Methodist movement arose that our churches began to catch the fire of missionary enthusiasm. I believe the solution of the grave difficulties before us lies in the creation of a Home Missionary enthusiasm. Our members are, for the most part, satisfied if they go to the house of God twice on a Sunday, and hear two thoughtful sermons, and many are contented with going in the morning only. Perhaps one simple solution of the question would be to throw open our chapels in the large towns, especially on a Sunday evening. Dr. Raleigh said that our evening services needed reconstruction. The time has not come, perhaps, when we can do away with pew rents, but the pew rents should only cover the morning service—(laughter)—and our ministers should consider themselves free in the evening to address all and sundry who might choose to crowd into our places of worship. We want to treat the outside population, in many respects, virtually as heathen, and until we get that conception into our minds we shall not solve the difficulties of the question. Thousands of people are unaccustomed to sing God's praise even in its simplest form. They cannot join in rarer, or listen to a very long address. Therefore, we must simplify our methods, if we are to get at them,

and adopt the same plans as our missionaries adopt when they go to the centre of Africa, or the South Sea Islands. We must cheapen our methods. I was struck by what Mr. McAll told us about rooms with the words *entrée libre* over them; and I believe the *ouvriers* of Paris are exceedingly struck with the fact that, whereas when they go to Roman Catholic places of worship there is a collection at every service, when they go to Mr. McAll's meeting there is nothing to pay. We cannot expect people to pay for religious services until they have some amount of interest in religion. (Hear.) We must first give them the free Gospel and an unpaid ministry. In highly respectable neighbourhoods such as Islington—(laughter)—we should have cathedrals and magnificent places of worship that cost no end of money; but in other places not so respectable we should do well to run up wooden sheds and iron erections in which the people may assemble. I do not know how to account for the fact that the Baptists have done much more in London than we have; but, perhaps, one reason is that they have been contented with humbler buildings. (No! no!) I think that the tabernacle style of building is, after all, the style which takes with a very large number of people in our large towns and cities. I only throw that out as a side suggestion. Then, if we want to cheapen our methods, we must have more lay preaching. But the great thing I look forward to is the creation of a new missionary enthusiasm in our churches, and a sense of the responsibility which belongs to them as Christian men and women of carrying the Gospel to our fellow-countrymen. (Applause.)

The Rev. ROBERT CRAIG, M.A. (Manchester): I should like to state one or two facts in regard to Lancashire. We have much in that county to deplore, but it should be taken into account that the channel into which a large amount of church energy in Lancashire flows is the Sunday-school work. Our best and most efficient members find it a delight to work in the Sunday-schools, and they have an ambition to present the truth as it is in Christ to the largest classes they can collect. What Mr. Pearson has said about new methods ought to be taken into serious consideration. One of our deacons, seven or eight years ago, thought he would try to find out the scholars who had been on the books of the school, and had retired from the congregation. He gathered together a considerable number, and for several years he has had a class of nearly 200 men. He will not receive more, and if any others apply, they have to wait until there is a vacancy. Now, what is possible in one town is possible in another. We cannot expect that ministers, with accumulated duties, can do the work of deacons. Our hope lies in the increased spiritual life of the churches, in the increased devotion of talent and service on the part of all the members. One of the greatest evils with which we have to contend is that of intemperance, and I hope the church will not shut its eyes to that fact.

The Rev. A. F. MUIR, M.A. (Maidstone): I remember when I was a student in the North, that a hurricane happened, and a church built in the suburb had its gable blown in, and afterwards the whole thing collapsed. It was a speculative concern; the trustees were very much put out, they held one or two meetings, and then they resolved to give up the whole concern. Now, there are many of our undertakings as Congregationalists which not remotely resemble that; they are so frail in structure, so narrow in basis, so unrelated to the living forces of the neighbourhood, that if any accidental misfortune occurs, it becomes a question whether it would not be wiser at once to close the whole concern. What we want is a broad basis—I do not mean a broad mechanical material basis, but a basis of living forces. I had the misfortune a year or two ago to take up a position on this subject which was not very popular at the time. I imagined that the statistics, so ably put together by Mr. Mearns, were being misinterpreted, and that our activities were being directed to the wrong end of the question when so much emphasis was laid upon the mere erection of material edifices. (Hear, hear.) Many seem to think almost the whole question is solved if we can build great churches and put our thousands of pounds into brick and mortar. The history of our denomination has been a magnificent refutation of that idea. If we have done anything as Congregationalists it has been by reason of the living spirituality of our members. Real, living work has commenced from some vital centre; it has been the outcome of some evangelistic enthusiasm; it has been because our members, in the first place, have been living, active Christians, that these churches have grown up and become a credit to us. We want a revival of the religious spirit amongst our laity. In our neighbourhood there are many villages in a terrible state of spiritual destitution. The only denomination that is at all coping with the wants of the neighbourhood is that of the Methodists, and the reason is that they cultivate lay-preaching. (Hear, hear.) I have set myself to this work since I went to Maidstone, and the results are encouraging. Young men are sent out to speak in cottage-rooms, chapels, and so on; they gather the people about them, and get at-

tentive listeners. One of the best results during the last season was in connection with the annual influx of hop-pickers. These people paralyse the efforts of our ministers, but one of the village chapels situated in the midst of them sent out preachers who were able to address hundreds of children and grown-up persons, and the results have been gratifying in the extreme. If we would give ourselves to such efforts as these, I am sure we should be rewarded in the highest degree. There is one other idea I think worth considering. Why is it that we have dropped so much of the old-fashioned system of itinerancy? Cannot there be itinerant lay-preaching as well as itinerant clerical preaching? Our village preachers might, say by means of vehicles, be able to compass all the wants of the neighbourhood. We should utilise to the greatest degree the means at our disposal. These little village chapels often imagine themselves despised. Now, I have tried, during the last year, to show that we have an interest in their work, and when their anniversaries have taken place I have announced them in the church, and wanted the members to accompany me to them. In this way I have been enabled to elicit gratifying expressions of opinion and feeling. A little village church in one of the most historical places in England, which had been in a very decaying condition, is now flourishing in the extreme. The place is crammed every time men go out to speak there; and one of the reasons for this is, that they feel, as they say, that the mother church is actively interested in them. I spoke to them lately about the state of the Communion Service, which consisted of an old cup, a blue bottle, and a blue dinner plate. The people contributed several pounds, which enabled me to buy a nice chaste, elegant service, which now does duty every time the Lord's Supper is administered.

The Rev. WILLIAM TRITTON (Yarmouth): The question how to reach the rural districts is one that for many years has been pressing on the minds of not a few ministerial brethren with whom I am associated in Norfolk. One of the ways by which we can reach these districts is a system of visitation by recognised and acceptable town pastors. I think it would do the town pastors themselves a world of good to go into the villages and speak the Gospel to simple people, not to read sermons, but to go out with warm hearts and ready speech, and address a company of simple villagers in the name of the Saviour. I remember when I was in Cambridgeshire some years ago there was a good man who had no great resources of his own, but who made up for his deficiency by sucking the brains of his neighbours. He laid under contribution his energetic and able friends for ten miles round, and he held weekly services which were addressed by these visitors from a distance. I have been again and again in his village, and always had the pleasure of seeing a large congregation, and I rarely preached anywhere with more comfort, or, I think, with more acceptance to others. This method is not new. Wales has been evangelised simply by this means. Their best men are not tied down to one particular spot, but they are sent through the length and breadth of the Principality, and everywhere the best talent is available for doing the hardest work. Is it not possible to devise means by which some of the best and ablest men can be sent where their work is most needed? If the Apostle Paul came to Birmingham, would he go first to Carr's-lane? [Mr. DALE: "Yes."] (Laughter.) I do not think he would. If he went to an agricultural county like Norfolk, would he go to the city of Norwich? Would he not rather go amongst the villagers, and teach from place to place? The method, you see, is a very old one, but we have utterly departed from it. Of course, you might supplement this work by any amount of lay agency, and I think that if the ministers were able to take the lead, the lay agency would naturally, and, in a short time, follow. I have tried in my own county to bring about some method of visitation of this sort, but I must say as yet with very indifferent and partial success. I mean to try it again, and I hope that my efforts in future years may be more effectively seconded than has been the case hitherto.

The Rev. WM. WILLIAMS: I live in London, but my duties in connection with one of our great societies take me all over the country. I have abundant opportunity of realising the painful state of things depicted in the paper by Mr. Browne. Several remedies have been proposed. There is a great difficulty in carrying them out, and I rise simply to propose in respect of them that which is becoming a recognised mode of action in our political and social life, namely—experimental legislation. Why cannot we follow the example of the Postmaster-General, and select a county for our operations? It might be a little county. "Fiat experimentum in corpore." I will not say "vilo," but "parvo." We might select one county in which to work out the principle of the co-operation of denominations, and in another county we might try the plan of grouping weak churches, and so with regard to the other modes of reform that have been proposed.

The Mr. ALBERT SPICER: The picture which we have had presented to us this morning is a very dark one, and no one feels its darkness more than those of us who are pretty in-

timately acquainted with the needs of our great metropolis. But I believe that brighter days are in store for us as Congregationalists in London. We have lost ground, mainly, I believe, for want of proper organisation. You must remember that the London Union is comparatively in its infancy, and up to the time of its formation there was no link or connection whatever between the different London churches; thus they had come to feel their isolation, and were utterly unable to do the aggressive work demanded of them. Our friends the Baptists have had the advantage of the Baptist Association, which has shown the power of combination in providing for increased religious accommodation; and they have had this advantage—that in their association they have combined a London Union and a London Chapel Building Society. The Chapel Building Society has done a grand work in the past, but I trust the day will come when that society and the London Union will manage to come on one platform. When that is done, we shall move a great deal faster. When we take into consideration what has been done by the London Union during the four or five years in which it has been at work, we need not feel in the least discouraged because the work that we can see is answering best in London is an aggressive work. We want our churches to realise more completely the needs of the metropolis, and to understand the difficulties of aggressive work in London, owing to the distinct class divisions of the population. Few people realise distinctly the different classes of society into which the population of London is divided. In the districts which are composed entirely of the working and lower classes it is utterly impossible to start aggressive work, unless it is helped from outside sources, and it is here where our London Union, combining the strength of each different church, can step in and do so much service. Great fault was found with the London Union when they were ambitious enough to include the acquisition of sites; but I think I shall not be contradicted when I say that our most successful work has been in enabling those on the spot to acquire a site, and agreeing to undertake the supply of a minister while the local friends have been devoting themselves entirely to bricks and mortar. Our friends in the suburbs must not rest contented until they acknowledge their twofold responsibility. They have a responsibility to the metropolis, which supplies them with their annual incomes, and they have a responsibility towards the districts in which they themselves dwell. If we can get our friends to realise this, we shall have gone a long way towards making up the deficiencies which burden us at present. I believe a large number of our churches can do a great deal more than they do in opening up new work, adopting the same means as have been so successfully adopted by Mr. McAll in Paris. If we could get a little more elastic in our church organisations, I believe we could do a great deal more in opening up new neighbourhoods. The needs of London are overwhelming, and I would earnestly appeal to our churches to consider what must be the necessities of 4,000,000 people. (Hear, hear.)

This closed the discussion.

THE MANSE FUND.

The Rev. J. C. GALLAWAY, M.A., then presented a statement respecting the English Chapel Building Societies' Manse Fund. The object of the Fund was stated to be to strengthen the fraternal relations of the Congregational churches, and facilitate co-operation in everything affecting their common interests. A scheme has been adopted for the purchase and building of suitable dwellings, where really needed, for men wholly devoted to the settled ministry. In some localities there were no houses at all within a reasonable distance of the church, while in others the houses were wholly unsuitable. Amongst the advantages attending the scheme were the saving of the minister's time and toil; the increase of his comfort; the saving of anxiety in reference to the quarterly payment of rent; the creation of an additional motive to worthy men not to hasten their departure; and the improvement of the social position of the minister and his family. From information received from certain county and district Unions, it appeared that there were already 220 manses, of which fifty-one were reported as new and suitable, and nearly 200 more required in the districts concerned. The actual need throughout the country was at least 500. The average cost of the houses was between £500 and £600. The committee had prepared a form of trust-deed applicable to manses. The minister was regarded only as an annual tenant, the amount of rent being a matter of agreement between him and the church. He was not, however, required to occupy the manse, if he deemed it unsuitable, in which case it was to be let to another tenant, and the rent to be added to the minister's stipend. £1,500 had been paid and promised to the fund. Out of seventy cases brought before the committee twenty-two had been selected as sufficiently matured for a definite vote of aid, the amount voted being £950. The committee asked for £5,000 as a preliminary fund, and appealed earnestly to the churches to supply the remaining £3,500.

COLLEGE REFORM.

The Rev. J. A. MACFADYEN, M.A., in the unavoidable absence of the Rev. A. Mackennal, through illness, presented a report of the College Reform Committee. It stated that in May last it had been reported to the assembly that conferences of the Northern and Southern colleges, with representatives of the College Reform Committee, had been held, and resolutions had been adopted affirming it desirable that two general Boards of Education should be formed, one in connection with the Northern and one in connection with the Southern Colleges, for the purpose of furthering the work of the colleges and stimulating the interest of the churches in ministerial education, and that these Boards should consist of ten members appointed by the committee of each college representing them, and of ten members appointed by the Congregational Union, and that each of the institutes of Bristol and Nottingham should send five members to each of the Boards. The committee had communicated with the colleges and institutes, who had responded to the request made, and had elected their representatives on the Boards. Their names were given in the report.

The Rev. J. ROBINSON, Park, Lancashire, then moved a resolution receiving the report, expressing the satisfaction of the assembly that the colleges had agreed to appoint representatives, and appointing other representatives to represent the Union on the Northern and Southern Boards, also directing the secretary of the committee, the Rev. A. Mackennal, to arrange for a meeting as early as convenient of each board, so that they might constitute themselves, and begin their practical work. He said it was only justice to refer to the ready service which Mr. Mackennal had rendered to the committee in connection with college reform. He also wished to thank the chairman for referring to the subject in his address from the chair. After what the chairman had said he did not like to use the word reform, but those who had taken part in the discussions had not the remotest idea of associating the evil things referred to by the chairman with the actual work of the colleges at the present time. He had often expressed his astonishment at the actual results produced by the present college system, and his gratitude to those who were carrying on such admirable work. The present movement took a definite shape three years ago, when it was generally agreed that some considerable reforms were necessary, but it was also agreed that they were impossible. They were not greatly alarmed at that circumstance, because they well knew that that was but one step which all reforms had to reach in the public mind before they became accomplished facts. At first they were insane and impossible; then sane but still impossible; and lastly sane and possible. One of the most favourable aspects of the movement was the attitude of the college committees and the heads of the colleges themselves. It was very satisfactory that the boards were composed mainly of men actually engaged in the working of the colleges, men of ripe experience and proved capacity, and he had no fear that there would be any deficiency of zeal in the cause of reform on their part. The colleges were taking more and more of their arts work to the universities and other national seats of learning. An effort should be made to take full advantage of the general advance in culture. He was aware that the college authorities and committees would not be very tolerant of any excessive or extravagant claims of reform, and he thought they were right. A scheme might look very well on paper, but it might be very difficult to carry it out when they had to deal with public property worth a quarter of a million of money. It would depend largely on the extent to which the Boards were supported by the public opinion of ministers and of church members, whether they would accomplish any great result. The task was certainly a very difficult one. One of the greatest difficulties was the number of colleges and their isolation. If the churches insisted on having ten or twelve to do the work which might as well be done, or even better, by three or four, it would easily be seen how costly such a system must be, and what multifarious work would have to be laid on all the tutors. Under the present system, taking into consideration the money sunk in buildings, &c., and the number of men who were trained, but never entered the ministry, he thought that the cost was something like a thousand pounds per man. He did not say that the article was too dear, but it certainly cost a great deal more than was needful. A great deal would have to be done before the number of the colleges could be reduced. England was not like a chess-board with counties for its squares, and the colleges for its men, which could be easily moved about. The colleges were like what Mr. Parnell wished the Irish peasants to be, "rooted in the soil," and their removal would, therefore, be a matter of great difficulty. Some scheme of co-operation, however, might be devised, by which there might be an interchange of students or of teachers, or of both; and a considerable step had been taken in that direction by the mere establishment of the Boards with representatives from all the colleges in each of the two groups. One of the most pleasing ex-

periences he had had in connection with College Reform was the discovery that many apparently insuperable difficulties turned out, when boldly faced, to be the veriest impostures. There was the difficulty, for instance, of the illiterate student. It was true that students did sometimes come up ill-prepared, but, considering the progress of general education and culture, they might reasonably expect them every year to come better prepared. He would urge ministers, and especially deacons, to take a deeper interest in the question than they had hitherto done. If the churches were polled, it would be found that not more than half of them contributed a shilling to the colleges; and yet they are all expected to have an educated minister whose training had cost a thousand pounds. In the present time of mental unsettlement they should make the most of their magnificent resources for giving a thorough education to their ministers so as to make them worthy of the grand traditions of learning that had been handed down from their Puritan ancestry. (Hear, hear.)

The Rev. BRYAN DALE, M.A., of Halifax, in seconding the resolution, said he felt sure that the chairman's address would help forward the cause of college progress in an important degree. The Committee would only act in sympathy and co-operation with the existing college authorities, and it would act very slowly, and cautiously. It would accomplish nothing effectually unless it had the thorough and general support of the Union and the churches connected with it. As soon as a general agreement had been arrived at, he hoped an opportunity would be given for a thorough discussion of the subject in the Assembly.

The resolution was then put and unanimously adopted.

THE AUTUMNAL JUBILEE MEETINGS.

Mr. COMPTON presented an address from the Manchester and Salford District Congregational Ministers and Deacons Association, to hold its autumnal meetings in 1881, the jubilee year, in Manchester.

The Rev. J. A. MACFAYDEN, M.A., expressed the pleasure which the friends in Manchester would experience in receiving the Union at its next autumnal meeting; and said they would do their best to make the members feel at home amongst them.

The Rev. E. R. CONDER, M.A., moved that the invitation be accepted. There was a great deal, he said, in Manchester to attract the members of the Union, and he did not think they should forget the fact that the Episcopal church was represented there by one of its most manly and outspoken prelates. (Applause.) He had no doubt that the hospitality of Manchester would not be bounded by sectarian limits. If a deputation of Episcopalian should come to them headed by Bishop Fraser, he was quite sure it would be met with a most enthusiastic welcome. (Laughter.)

The Rev. R. BALGARNIE, (Scarboro), in seconding the resolution said the members were greatly indebted to their brethren at Manchester for their generous and spontaneous offer. They might have waited for some years before their turn came to receive the Union, but they had stepped out of their course, and had given another proof of their warm and hospitable feeling. He should be glad if the brethren of Manchester could see their way to invite the Bishop to come amongst them. (No, no.) At a recent congregational Union meeting at Scarboro the clergy were invited, and the archdeacon and the clergy sat down with them at dinner. He thought they should seek all possible opportunities of cultivating fraternal and Christian intercourse.

The resolution was adopted by the general rising of the Assembly.

VOTES OF THANKS.

The Rev. W. F. CLARKSON, B.A., of Edgbaston, moved—"That the Assembly tenders to the Rev. Dr. Newth its cordial thanks for the great services he has rendered to the Union as chairman for one year, both in the powerful and eloquent address delivered by him from the chair, and in his able conduct in the business of the assembly, and prays that he may be long spared to the churches for the efficient discharge of the duties of his honourable and important office." The Chairman's address, he said, had won the hearty recognition of many other denominations besides their own, and had received a most grateful response from the members of their own churches. Dr. Newth might have chosen a subject which would perhaps have better tickled the fancy of the members of the churches than that of college training, but he could have chosen no subject which required to be laid more upon the hearts and consciences of the churches, not only in that town, but throughout the country.

The Rev. Dr. BRUCE, of Huddersfield, briefly seconded the motion, which was unanimously adopted.

The CHAIRMAN, in acknowledging the vote of thanks, said he should be sufficiently rewarded if anything that he had said in his address should guide the action and direct the deliberations of the important boards that had been appointed to carry out the great work entrusted to them. Having filled the office which he had occupied during seven generations of students—five years being reckoned as a generation—he felt that the

time must soon come when his service would come to an end. But it was a great satisfaction to him to see gathering around him so many competent men amongst his own students and the students of other men whom he loved and revered, who were so well prepared to carry on the good work. He should like to repeat to them the kind words that were spoken to himself thirty-three years ago by his revered colleague, "You must increase, but I must decrease." He felt that the work might be safely left in their hands, and that they would live to see greater things done in the work of preparing efficient and holy men for the service of the Church. (Applause.)

The Rev. E. J. HARTLAND moved a vote of thanks to the Rev. E. R. Conder, the preacher for the year, and to the brethren who had addressed the Assembly at the meetings in Birmingham and the neighbourhood.

Mr. WILLIAM HOLBORN seconded the motion, which was unanimously adopted.

The CHAIRMAN proposed a cordial vote of thanks to the Local Committee, and especially to the chairman, Mr. Bickerton Williams, and the secretary, the Rev. T. Stevens, for their self-denying exertions in connection with the arrangements for entertaining the Union; also to the friends in Birmingham and the neighbourhood, who had so kindly received the members into their houses.

The Rev. A. MEARNS seconded the motion, and expressed his high appreciation of the efforts made by the committee and the other friends in Birmingham.

The resolution was unanimously adopted.

Mr. BICKERTON WILLIAMS (chairman of the committee), in acknowledging the vote of thanks, said, that the committee was under the deepest obligation to Mr. Stevens for the great and self-denying efforts he had made in connection with the meeting of the Union.

The Rev. T. STEVENS also acknowledged the vote of thanks.

He said he was thankful to have contributed to the satisfactory result which had been achieved, and was amply rewarded in the success of the meetings. It had been no light matter to arrange for a thousand visitors, and to secure some eight hundred or thousand hosts. The guests and the hosts had been a burden upon his mind and heart, and he had occasionally compared himself to Issachar, "a strong ass bowed down between two burdens." (Laughter.) The experience he had gained within the last three or four weeks could never be of any use to him again, but he was thankful he had passed through it, and was strong and well after all his anxiety and labour. (Applause.)

The CHAIRMAN brought the session to a close by pronouncing the benediction.

THE SCEPTICAL TENDENCIES OF THE AGE.

A supplementary conference on the Sceptical Tendencies of the Age was held in Carr's-lane on Friday morning, the Rev. Dr. Newth presiding. The restriction confining the body of the chapel to delegates was withdrawn. The proceedings, which were limited to two hours, commenced with a short devotional service, conducted by the Rev. G. M. Murphy.

SCETICISM, ITS CAUSES AND REMEDIES.

The Rev. J. RADFORD THOMSON, M.A., read the following paper on this subject. He said: It is not easy to define religious scepticism. Perhaps most of our reasoned belief begins from doubt, though faith necessarily underlies both acts. Modern intellectual inquiry is exacting, and demands that all authority shall be authenticated. It is a canon of Protestantism that our religion, to be worth much, must rest on individual inquiry and reflection, leading to conviction. We claim and concede the right of private judgment. If all men must doubt, who are to be deemed sceptics? I answer, not those who doubt in order to believe, but rather those to whom doubt is "the conclusion of the whole matter"—the proper, final, if not restful attitude of the mind. And religious sceptics are those who deliberately and decisively doubt concerning the great facts and doctrines of Christianity. Infidels, strictly speaking, differ from sceptics in holding the settled belief that the tenets distinctive of us Christians are incredible and false. But how shall it be decided what measure of doubt or unbelief constitutes men sceptics or infidels? There are many grades, and even among so-called orthodox Christians, two reasoning men are not often found to think altogether alike. Some, for instance, doubt the infallible accuracy of Scripture, who yet accept the cardinal Christian facts of the Incarnation and Resurrection of our Lord. In our own day, many deny what, in our judgment, are integral parts of Christianity, who are yet strenuous defenders of religion, and believe in nothing more earnestly than in the being and government of God, and in the moral nature, accountability, and future life of man. The supernatural facts of the Gospel history may be denied, and yet a supernatural moral government may be passionately upheld. Such is the position

of Mr. Greg, in his "Enigma of Life," and apparently of Mr. Stopford Brooke, in his recently-published letter to his congregation. It is a question of great practical interest, How far have doubt and unbelief penetrated British society? Lines may be drawn which will roughly circumscribe their present influence. The agricultural classes, both farmers and labourers, and the commercial classes, the merchants of our great cities, and the shopkeepers of country towns, seem comparatively little affected by the wave of unbelief. The classes at present most sensitive to this tendency are university and professional men, and their families and the artisans in our large industrial centres of population. But, year by year, those who, by reason of comparative remoteness from intellectual interests and activity, have been more or less secluded from the influences of infidelity, are being reached by the ever-widening undulation. It is idle to suppose that an educated people can be kept in ignorance of the speculations of leading and powerful minds. If the British people are to remain Christian, it must be not through unacquaintance with infidelity, but by a reasoned and deliberate preference of Christianity over any alternative that may be presented. Another important question is, How far are our Congregational Churches exposed to the assaults of infidelity? Probably infidelity is not more widely spread among the educated to-day than in the last century; assuredly it does not present itself in so offensive a form. There are, no doubt, moral causes for unbelief. Yet the cases do not seem to be very numerous in which the rejection of religion is an apology for gross vice and sin. Luxury and self-indulgence create a repugnance to spiritual religion, an insensibility to spiritual claims, an indifference to eternity. Materialism sanctions the supremacy of the bodily appetites, and, in some cases, accounts for, in some cases is favoured and fostered by, a contented abandonment to the lowest pleasures. But the characteristic infidelity of our day is, less than in former times, associated with a vicious and debased life. We hear much of the scientific grounds of religious scepticism, and science is depicted as a rising flood, by whose waters all theology must be drowned. It is somewhat strange that we theologians have no fear, and that few men take more pleasure than do we in the magnificent advances of physical science. We do not feel the ground less firm beneath our feet. The fact is, that science has made such rapid progress in the discovery and classification of physical causes, that its cultivators have, in many cases, become its devotees, and have lost sight of true causes, human and Divine. Science, we are told, objects to Christianity, because it professes to have originated in the miraculous, which is declared to be the impossible. Science, we are told, objects to all religion, because it declares man to be spiritual and the subject of a personal God; whilst Science is said to have proved that man's actions stand in no need of a soul to animate them; and Nature, the universe, stands in no need of a mind to create and guide it, matter being quite sufficient to account for both. The corrective to these errors is to be found in a deeper and juster conception of causality, of the premises of all reasoning, and the nature and scope of human knowledge. Literary influence has not been without its power upon the spread of religious doubt. Philosophy in the hands of Mill, criticism in those of Mr. John Morley, science in those of Professor Tyndall, have lent to scepticism all the captivating charms of candour, of style, of language, and of imagination. Time will not permit me to speak of the influence of the destructive criticism of documents and history, which, originating in Germany, has been imported into this country, and by means of which theology has suffered much at the hands of theologians themselves. The prevalence, ever since the time of David Hume, of empirical philosophy, of "phenomenism," and the revival in France, and more recently in Germany, of materialistic psychology, have both affected the thinking and writing of our English physiologists. Hence, to many apprehensions, a physicist is almost of necessity an opponent of spiritual philosophy and religion. The fashionable philosophies of Positivism and of evolution have higher aspirations, but agree in rejecting the solutions and the claims of Christianity. Nothing is, at the present time, of more importance to the best interests of human thought than the establishment of a sound and spiritual philosophy. In overturning—as such a philosophy must do—the principles of Hume, it will, at the same moment, demolish many a pretentious and paradoxical structure reared upon this fascinating but sandy foundation by his confident disciples. Let me point out a less special cause for the spread of scepticism. I refer to a revived interest in religion and religious questions. In our days men, happily, do feel and think, talk and write, about religion, as of what is of vital concern and moment to mankind. Convictions have, accordingly, to a large extent, taken the place of indifference, leaning, here towards acquiescence, there towards contempt. The change is a step forward; if it makes our task more arduous, it also makes it more hopeful. Further, in justice to those whom we are constrained to regard as antagonists of the Gospel of Christ, it must be observed that some of the current infidelity is a reaction from misrepresentations by Christians of the doctrines and the spirit of the religion they profess. Not seldom, alas! have the advocates of Christianity been its most dangerous foes within the camp. The sacerdotalism of some so-called Catholics, the dry and selfish formality of some so-called Evangelicals, the worldliness and inconsistency of some nominal Christians in all churches, have done a little towards repelling men from Him

whom they have misrepresented. The churches are not blameless in this matter. Departure from the simplicity of the New Testament must be held to account for much of the hostility that prevails in society, and so largely distinguishes its attitude towards our religion. Juster and more Scriptural representations, alike of man and of God, will disabuse men's minds of many prejudices, and will prove more corrective than reproach. I have only time, in conclusion, to indicate, what I have no doubt other speakers will more fully deal with—some of the ways in which the evils we are considering should be dealt with. We have four aims to keep before us—to confirm believers, to direct the inquiring and wavering, to repel the assaults of those who attack Christianity, and to counteract the general causes of scepticism. Various means must be employed in order to attain these varied ends. The young should be thoroughly instructed and fortified, alike in the family and in the school. It is gratifying to observe that Christian evidences are now regularly taught in some of our high-class schools. Care should be taken that instruction should, in this as in other matters, be abreast of the days in which we live. Public lectures should be given, varying in character with neighbourhoods and populations, in some cases more elementary, in others more philosophical. "The Christian Evidence Society," for its public and literary services alike, deserves our cordial thanks and warm support. If our wealthy philanthropists were more alive to "the signs of the times," that admirable society would have, not hundreds but thousands, placed at its disposal. Preaching should be "for defence and confirmation" in the faith. Although no believer in controversial preaching, I am convinced of the importance of presenting before our auditors the authoritative claims of Christianity. They should feel that we have ourselves gone through the difficulties with which they are contending, and by God's grace have come out upon the other side. The advocates of a bold and spiritual philosophy should themselves be outspoken and resolute, and the superficial teaching of the several classes of unbelievers should be examined and confuted from the professors' chairs in our colleges, and—where opportunity offers—in the public Press. Finally, it is in the power of all Christians to do much to check the spread and counteract the mischief of infidelity, by simply being what they profess to be. A pure, self-denying, benevolent life, is to most minds the best and most effective witness to the supernatural truth of the Gospel, and the supernatural power of the spirit of Christ. Let us all resolve that we will give our fellow-men to understand that, in Christianity, we ourselves have found the soundest peace for the conscience, the truest law for the life, and the brightest hope of immortality; that it is we,

"Who, rowing hard against the stream,
See distant gates of Eden gleam,
And do not dream it is a dream."

(Loud applause.)

WHITHER AGNOSTICISM & SECULARISM LEAD.

The Rev. T. T. WATERMAN, B.A., said: In the remarks I have to offer, I propose to confine myself to what is at the present time the most widely prevalent and the most dangerous form of scepticism—agnosticism. There is a large class of persons who do not on the one hand believe in, nor on the other hand deny, the existence of an independent originator, whom, if we please, we may call God. To them the term "agnostic" has been applied to denote one who, while he acknowledges that the belief in the existence of a First Cause of the universe is an intellectual necessity, yet affirms that, owing to the imperfection of the human intellect, all knowledge of His attributes or character is impossible. Thus the two great writers of this school, Mr. Herbert Spencer and Mr. Fiske, definitely assert that this belief is a necessity of thought, and claim to be the only rational theists. The First Cause, then, is not known, cannot be known, and must for ever remain unknowable and incomprehensible by man, and to ascribe any attribute to Him is only to deify a number of finite human conceptions. It follows from this that we cannot ascribe to this First Cause personality, or consciousness, or intelligence; we cannot say that He is holy, or just, or benevolent; we cannot speak of Him as the moral governor of the universe, the rewarder of virtue, the punisher of vice, the supreme authority to whom we are under obligation, whose laws we should obey, whose favour we may secure. This suspense of belief respecting God is practically Atheism; for although it does not in words deny the being of God, it in fact places Him beyond our knowledge, or trust, or love, or obedience, or worship. Indeed, with the Gnostic God we have nothing whatever to do. Now let us look at some of the tendencies and consequences of this form of scepticism. If we cannot know anything about God, all reference to Him in life and conduct is utterly meaningless. There can be no such thing as acting from a sense of duty, or a feeling of love to Him. There is no moral obligation to obey Him, to please Him, to endeavour to be like Him. If man's moral character is to be

elevated (if elevation be possible), it must be without any reference to God. And Christianity as it was taught and exemplified by our Lord Jesus Christ is deprived of its strongest motive and most effective sanction; in fact, the motive to morality is separated from all religion altogether. The man who does not know anything about God feels himself to be under no obligation to be virtuous, or honest, or kind, because it is the wish of the Supreme Being that he should be so. He may admire the pure and lofty morality of Jesus Christ, but he sees no force in the motive lying behind such expressions as these—"I came down from heaven, not to do Mine own will, but the will of Him that sent Me; My meat is that I may do the will of Him that sent Me and finish His work; I do always those things that please Him." The agnostic then arrives at the conclusion that all the sanctions which religion has been supposed to furnish to morality may be dispensed with as being no better than illusions; and that all the motives which are derived from our relation to God are non-existent. From this it follows that those of us who are actuated by the fear of God, or a desire to observe His will, or loyal reverence or devout love to Him, are altogether deluded. We either have no such motives as we suppose, or we are the victims of self-hallucination. Is it a fact, then, that the millions of Christians are suffering from a diseased state of mind, and are deceived in their own consciousness? Is that so? But while agnosticism may deny and dispense with the religious sanction of morality, it does not dispense with morality, although in practice the measure of it shades down to positive immorality. These are its principles: That the promotion of our individual and of the general well-being in this world is at once our highest wisdom and duty; that the only means upon which we can rely for the accomplishment of this object is human effort, based upon knowledge and experience; that conduct should be judged by its issues in this world only; what conduces to the general well-being is right; what has the opposite tendency is wrong. These are the principles of those agnostics who call themselves secularists. What, then, is the test and criterion of morality? Usefulness. And how is usefulness determined? By experience. And what is the end and object of this morality of usefulness? The general well-being and elevation of mankind. This, then, is the motive to morality. The improvement of the race takes the place of religious regard for God as the chief reason why a man should be truthful and pure, and honest, and generous. Is it an adequate reason? Is it an effective motive? Are its results most manifest in the lives of those who discard religion, and live for this life only? Is the slow elevation of the race an end for which non-religious men willingly bear privation with patience, resist temptations to falsehood and dishonesty, and eat the crust of honest, diligent toil? The promotion of the well-being of mankind is a Christian motive as well as an agnostic one; but, apart from Christ, it has not shown itself to be very powerful either in rectifying social disorders at home or in extending the blessings of civilisation among degraded nations. Tested by its usefulness, the morality of agnosticism, if it be high, has not shown itself to be extensive and efficient. It is also affirmed that the present life is the only one of which we have certain knowledge. It follows that as there is no certainty respecting any future state, it is unnecessary to make any preparation for it—indeed, it is a waste of time and thought to do so. It also follows that no motive of hope or fear, derived from a future state, should have an influence upon us. Some speak more positively, and affirm that our individual consciousness and personal being are really bounded by the present life, at the close of which the consequences of our actions, so far as they affect ourselves, come to an end. There is, therefore, but one issue—death, cessation of being—to the covetous, unprincipled oppressor and the diligent, humane benefactor, to the greatest villain and the most self-sacrificing helper of the distressed. Surely the tendency of such sceptical views of a future state is not likely to control the vicious passions of the irreligious, nor to promote the virtue of the majority of mankind! Further, the agnosticism that doubts the existence of God and of a future state, and proclaims an uncertain morality, seriously weakens human responsibility. As the future well-being and elevation of mankind are dependent on what we are to do; so our present well-being and elevation above our ancestors, is, according to agnosticism or secularism, due to what our ancestors were and did. We are their heirs. We inherit their opinions, habits, morals. Why we should be better than they were is not obvious. At any rate, we are simply what our fathers transmitted to us, without any will or help or hindrance of our own; without any intervention of a Higher Power. We are simply the creatures of circumstances; we cannot help ourselves; we are not free agents; we have no free will; we are, therefore, not responsible for what we are and do. All this is avowed. Responsibility is denied, a sense of wrong is scorned; there is said to be no such thing as sin; guilt is a bugbear. This is the inevitable conclusion from the

teaching that we are simply the heirs of our ancestors, with no God above, no future state before, no freedom of self-control within us. Many men who accept agnostic principles would plead, and not unreasonably, that bad habits, being transmitted, are inevitable misfortunes, not culpable crimes. The child of a drunkard who habitually becomes intoxicated is therefore not to be blamed; the son of a thief who steals ought not to be put into prison. And this result must follow, that all existing moral obligations and social ties will be broken, and the ideal philanthropy and regard for the elevation of mankind possessed by the few will be accompanied by the vicious self-indulgence of the many, and this state of things will be defensible by those who deny their personal responsibility. Such being the tendencies and consequences of agnosticism as it exists among the higher classes of society, and under the designation secularism among the artisan classes, the question which demands our serious attention is,—Are these principles widely diffused, have they taken a deep root in the public mind and life? I reply that it is impossible for any one who is well-acquainted with the current literature of the day to do otherwise than answer in the affirmative. They are no longer found in dry books which few persons read, but they form the basis of the theories of not a few eminent writers on physical science, are supported by all the weight of their authority, and are widely diffused in popular addresses and articles in the periodical Press. It may be quite true that the chief works of this kind are profoundly studied by only a select class of readers; but the fact that they are in popular demand, and that they are commended, quoted, and summarised in papers which circulate among the artisan classes, shows that their sentiments are acceptable to a large number of persons. Although the number of readers who succeed in fully mastering the works of Mr. John Stuart Mill and Mr. Herbert Spencer may be limited, yet it is incontrovertible that no writers are more powerfully influencing the current of English thought to-day in all sections of society. But I will confirm this opinion by a quotation from an article by Mr. Leslie Stephen, in the *Fortnightly Review* for August last. He is an avowed agnostic, and he says, "If atheism be used to express the state of mind in which God is identified with the unknown, and theology is pronounced to be a collection of meaningless words about unintelligible chimeras, then I have no doubt, and I think few people doubt, that atheists are as plentiful as blackberries. . . . Open atheism is not common in decent English society. But a radically sceptical frame of mind in regard to theology is so common that the opposite state of mind is fast becoming the exception." That is his testimony to the prevalence of agnosticism. Let me give you another. The *Spectator* says, "Thousands of men and more women in England are determined agnostics from self-pity and philanthropy. In both instances the result is a tendency in all who so believe towards excessive earthiness; not always ignoble, or selfish, or sensual in its manifestation, but still a state of mind in which the proved inconvenience and inutility of any action, or any line of thought, is a final reason against it. The world is to be made happier, and happier only; and though of course individuals see that happiness is nobility (and there are agnostics who are also determined ascetics or stoics), still happiness is the end, and to the mass, happiness is as much sugar as they wish. There can be no worse condition of mind; and it is of this that among suffering masses there is danger." It is among these suffering masses that the advocates of secularism spread their opinions. There are two active secularist societies, each of which has branches in many towns and a weekly paper with a large circulation. In one of them, the statement was recently made: "As to the vast majority of English freethinkers, we make bold to affirm that they do not belong to either society, and, perhaps never will. Many—and among them not the least eminent—feel that they can fight the battle best independently." The extent of the prevalence of scepticism is, therefore, not to be measured by the weakness of "secular" organisations. There are, however, signs of considerable activity, if official reports may be relied on—such as the delivery in one year of 1,080 lectures, the expenditure of £3,800 for propaganda, the distribution of 67,000 tracts, and a large increase in the sale of literature. Now, are we to acquiesce in this state of things, or to make strenuous efforts to provide a remedy for them? Many would heartily welcome certainty in respect to those matters in which they are in doubt, would consider any fair solution of difficulties, and would be thankful for a firm foundation for faith and hope. Hear the despairing wail of a writer in the last number of one of the "secular" weekly papers: "Agnostic helonism was not always our religion. We travelled to it laboriously and painfully from one of the oldest of extant orthodoxies, and we can well recollect how cheerful at first appeared the view to which reason and conscience alike had driven us. . . . Who would not rejoice, if it were true, that absolute goodness is eternally wedded to unlimited power? Who would not gladly learn that the present narrow limits of individual human life might be transcended? If we do not believe with the

more enlightened and good-natured of our Christian fellow-citizens, it is not that we should not be glad to get some of the things, at least, which they offer us; but we can get no evidence that these good things exist." Can we be indifferent to such a heart-cry as that? Shall we rest in authority and dogmatic tradition, and simply stand apart from controversy, and allow our fellow-countrymen, our neighbours, our friends, perhaps our children, to drift away into "sunless seas of doubt," to be stranded on a hopeless shore? As Christian men and women—as the avowed followers of Him who came to seek and to save that which was lost—should we not bestir ourselves without delay? There is no fear for Christianity, but there is fear for those who are rejecting it. There is no room for apprehension that the light will be extinguished, but there is for those who are walking in darkness and know not whether they are going, and for those who love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil. "Preaching the Gospel" as it has hitherto been preached and taught does not appear to meet the requirements of the case, for the present state of opinion has arisen under the very sound of it. Something else is necessary. Definite instruction given by those who possess competent learning and full knowledge of the really vital questions of the day, is what is urgently needed, for many in the congregation and Sunday-school have grown up with only an imperfect acquaintance with what the Scriptures really do teach, and the reasons why we accept their teaching. Hence the ignorance which is the parent of doubt, and which leads ultimately to either scepticism or superstition. For the removal of ignorance we have to bring out clearly the truth, "the truth as it is in Jesus," and the evidence which He gave that He was, indeed, "the Son of God and the Saviour of men." For literary aids there are now able commentaries which furnish readers with full, accurate, and critical knowledge of the Holy Scriptures, and throw light on controversial subjects, and works on Christian evidence published by the Congregational Union, the Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge, the Religious Tract Society, and the Christian Evidence Society, as well as by private publishers. The last-named society has just published its five volumes of lectures at a nominal price. Here, then, is the material which, with the personal experience affirming "I know in whom I have believed," will enable teachers to show what Christianity is, and why we believe it to be the very truth of God, a revelation from Him and of Him for the relief of human miseries and the elevation of the race. Lectures on debated topics might be delivered, and the popular Press employed for the dissemination of truth. Classes for the study of Christian evidences should be formed for the education of the young. The Christian Evidence Society offers help in the delivery of lectures, and is prepared to examine those who have studied specified works of Christian evidence, and to give prizes to those who show sufficient acquaintance with the subject studied. But whatever be the practical means employed for dispelling the darkness of error by the light of truth, for showing that there is a sure foundation for faith and hope and love toward God and man, for saving those that are sinking into the miserable inanity of unbelief, it must not be forgotten that it must be accompanied by practical, living evidence that we do believe what we profess to believe, that we are sincere in our faith in Christ, and by earnest prayer for the convincing and converting power of the Holy Spirit. (Applause.)

HOW SHOULD THE SCEPTICAL TENDENCY BE APPROACHED?

As to "The Method and Spirit in which the Sceptical Tendency should be approached," the Rev. EDWARD WHITE, before reading what he had prepared, begged leave to explain that he had heard for the first time, at the meeting yesterday, that a paper was expected from him to-day. He had, therefore, risen early that morning, and done what he could, but of course it did not deserve to be called "a paper," in comparison with the complete and careful compositions to which they had just listened with so much thankfulness. His subject was, "The right method and spirit of approaching scepticism." Scepticism, he said, is one of those words which do not yield a more distinct idea under closer consideration. On the contrary, increasing knowledge and deeper reflection will indispose us to fasten the name of sceptic very readily upon most of our neighbours. We must be morally just first of all. Out of a sound morality may grow, with heaven's help, some day a sound theology. But out of a corrupt and heathenish theology will never grow a sound morality. The fear of a God is a help to morality only when the character of that God is presented as intelligently moral. Let us be just. Some of those whose doubts at present go deepest have the least of the evil sceptical temper, and the most of a spirit of truth-seeking, to which God is likely to appear in their darkness. Some of those whose profession of faith is most full and orthodox, only wanted a good

deal more ability to have turned out the most mischievous infidels. Not a few are safe-guarded from unbelief only by a complete lack of speculative power, and by a stolid incapacity to think for five minutes on the same subject. Our Lord joins together in His most tremendous anathemas the Pharisees and the Sadducees. The temper of an anathematizing orthodoxy, and the temper of a spiteful, carping materialism, are only Siamese-twins. They have not merely a uniting gristle, but the same circulation. These are considerations which may serve to moderate our language when we go out to war against infidelity. I know personally scarcely any infidels of any rank, especially among the working-classes—or men on whom I should like to fasten that name. There are myriads who doubt, or disbelieve, as some of us do, things that are taught in many of the churches; but that does not constitute infidelity. There are, no doubt, a certain number of fanatical mockers at particular narratives in the Bible—men, for example, who run a perpetual muck, on Balaam's ass, against all the Old Testament Scriptures. But these people are few in every neighbourhood; and their difficulties might be much lessened in that special instance, if they would reflect that, as Mr. Lynch used to say, "the ass did not become a prophet until the prophet had become an ass"—(laughter and applause)—and further by reminding them that an argumentative donkey—(laughter)—is really the only sort of teacher that some dishonest people deserve, there being really in the Ruler of the world, as is said in the second Psalm, more of mockery and "derision" for conceited "fools" than they are in the habit of considering possible. The scepticism which it is worth our while to consider pervades the church-going community almost as much as the non-church-going. It is that which arises in a nation when the theological and ecclesiastical in Christianity have superseded the historical and moral. A man may honestly feel many difficulties so long as he thinks of the forms and spirit of modern Christianity, with its artificial requirements: but very few men, before whom Jesus Christ has been fairly set forth, as He is in the gospels, "full of compassion" for sinners and mourners, really think that He was an impostor. In their heart of hearts few men are infidels in relation to Him. Now I have had a good deal to do in my time, as with other ranks, so with the upper part of the working classes, and in my opinion they are not nearly so hostile to true Christianity as is inferred or supposed from their non-church-going habits. And there cannot be a greater mistake than to address them on the supposition that they are sworn enemies of Jesus Christ. There are many reasons why they do not care much to enter our upper and middle-class churches, with their expensive requirements, their too visible classification of worshippers according to their pecuniary worth, their close association, by trusts-deeds with systems of theology which are not quite in harmony with common-sense, or perhaps with the New Testament. But they would come sometimes, I think, even to these, if we would but take the right methods. Mr. Pearson yesterday expressed, in the most felicitous manner, nearly everything that is needful to be said on this point. We have a day set apart for the instruction of the English people. We have innumerable buildings set apart for their instruction. We have fixed services and occasions for public discourse, with this popular instruction for its end. Yet unhappily we have so managed matters, that the masses of the working people and small tradesmen, all around, will have nothing to do with us. In greater London, Mr. Mearns says that there are more than two millions who might go to church, but who do not and will not. These buildings are frequented by the middle classes and their dependents, and by a section of the working folks; but except among the Methodists—and then only in exceptional instances—the bulk of the townsfolk, the artisan classes, engineers, building trades, manufacturers, railway servants, &c., are not fond of sitting at the feet of the ministers of our Christendom. Nor will they sit there. I suspect, very often, until there is a considerable revolution in our mode of spending some of the time inside the churches, and a considerable enlargement of our ideas as what it is lawful to do sometimes on Sunday in the way of public instruction in natural, historical, and Scriptural knowledge. (Hear, hear.) So long as we persist in giving nothing but sermons with a text, sometimes torn out of connection, with three heads, and an application at the end, these people will not listen to us. That is not the way in which they manage an argument in the *Dispatch* and *Lloyd's Weekly News*. We must give a clear explanation of the passage, a short argument upon it, and an application all through. They do not like our style at present. But this is not because they are infidels. Nothing of the sort! They have been taught in our Sunday-schools, after a fashion. They know better than to ride on Balaam's ass into outer darkness. (Laughter.) But they are very ill-informed on the contents of the Scriptures, and they know it. They know Christianity chiefly through different ecclesiastical versions of it, rather than from its original records. They know next to nothing of general history—though they would much

like to know—and they are very weary with their daily work, and with the fierce battle to make both ends meet at home by their industry. They are terribly tempted by the places of amusement; and they do not care to go to hear anything so uninteresting to them as are at least two sermons and prayers out of four preached and presented in English sanctuaries. It is we who are the infidels! We do not believe in the divinity of the Bible enough to let it amply tell its own story to the people. We do not always read it in church as if we believed it. If a *Times* article were read aloud, in snippets, as badly as half of us read the short lessons in church, as huskily and as indistinctly and as unintelligibly—(hear, hear)—would you cross the road to listen to it? You know you would not, much less take sittings to listen regularly to such an entertainment. (Laughter.) Popular neglect of church-going is caused, I think, chiefly by the dead-alive, irreverent, uninspired Christianity of us ministers and churches all round. Read the records of John Wesley's life, in Abel Stevens's "History of Methodism," three vols., 7s. 6d., sold at the Conference Office. (Laughter.) That is a prolonged treatise on the art of reaching and educating religiously the English people. That which succeeded in the eighteenth century would succeed in the nineteenth—fire from heaven to make a bonfire of the buckram, and a holy determination to make the people welcome to the eternal festival of the love of Jesus. Oh, that life of John Wesley! I have just been reading it again. It is enough to make most of us Congregational ministers and churches sink into the earth with shame and indignation at our own way of going on. We, who are for ever publishing our "principles," our "freedom," and I know not what; and all the while are almost as absolute slaves to formality, decorum, uniformity of procedure as any of the Ritualists! How many of us dare to act on Mr. Pearson's advice to make the evening service a time of free admission to the public, and to render it so interesting, lively, earnest, and brief that the people shall be "compelled to come in" by an invincible attraction? Shall we not try the experiment of abating the alleged popular infidelity by first of all getting hold of something which we ourselves profoundly believe, on "judgment to come," and on the salvation in Christ? Never mind if it does not mount up to thirty-nine Articles. If you can only believe one dozen, that will be quite enough to begin with. (Applause.) Only believe them, meditate on them, pray over them, bring down fire from heaven, and then see whether these "infidels" will not begin to come in. Popular unbelief is chiefly that which springs from sin, not from speculation. (Hear, hear.) It is to be vanquished by truth and grace, not by terror; by love rather than by creeds and ritual. Above all, stick to the Bible. Let the chief end of our studies be to make this thrice-wonderful series of books vocal, just as an organist tries to make the dead Mendelssohn speak. Be, as the Bible is, dramatic, historical, natural, above all, affectionate. Give attention to reading. (Hear, hear.) Read, explain, enforce the history in order to kindle a real fire in your sanctuary, and see if the cold and weary hearts around will not begin to draw near and thank you. Divine truth in Scripture, Divine truth in Nature (a phrase I much prefer to "Science"), and Divine truth in human History—these are always interesting. Divine methods of teaching, too, are always interesting. It is the droning of the "scribe," made up of snoring, and infidelity, and sham piety, which is really dull, and which chiefly supplies the aliment to popular scepticism. If we in our lives and teaching represent Jesus Christ risen from the dead, there will not be in our neighbourhood much noisy unbelief. "The common people heard him gladly." Their lives are too sad not to be glad to hear of such a Saviour. The really dangerous scepticism is the half belief among us church-goers, in ministers and deacons, and leading church members; who read the pernicious books of that narrow "Broad Church" party of the Church of England, till they no longer credit the miraculous history of Christ, or the Divine authority of apostolic doctrine. (Hear, hear.) The really dangerous scepticism is not in *Lloyd's Weekly News*, but in that part of the Press which is written by men who have lost their own faith, by quondam City Missionaries, Episcopalian, Wesleyan, and Presbyterian and Independent ministers, who, ceasing to care for the old work of "saving souls," sneer perpetually at those who still hold fast the main truth "with both hands earnestly." As to our own Press, I acknowledge thankfully recent improvements. I hope it is not an offence to add, May it give that full and hearty support to an affectionate and evangelical Christianity which is so much required! May it protest, as it ought to do, against the activity of the party which ceases not night nor day to distil its paralysing cobra-poison of indifference into the minds of our young people! If you kill out all spiritual enthusiasm in our churches by half belief and by smart criticism, the evangelizing spirit dies with it. If I ever had to do with a genuine, old-fashioned infidel, who openly attacked the whole Scripture as a wilful or unconscious deception, I should try one remedy only—the old one—known long before our scientific days. I should pray earnestly for him, and for myself, that God would en-

able me to behave properly, modestly, and affectionately to him. I should set before him tenderly the history of Jesus Christ with His words on the inextinguishable fire of the wrath to come, the eternal doom, and on the pardoning love of God to sinners. If that fail, I think that no external argument can reach him. The Bible is remarkable as never pretending to persuade the minds of all wranglers as to its claims. It commands itself "to every man's conscience in the sight of God." If a man have conscience that will reach him. But if his conscience is "seared" by a life of uncleanness, dishonesty, levity, and arrogant defiance of God and righteousness, none of your arguments from prophecy and miracles will touch him. The exterior of Revelation is so revolting to man's natural ideas of religion, that you never can make people really satisfied with the Old and New Testaments until they understand and feel the overpowering love of God in Christ which burns at the centre of the Bible. The really victorious argument is there. And only the man who knows and feels that can teach it. A church with a cold-blooded unconverted minister and people standing in the midst of a non-church-going population, is the most effectual engine for the destruction of the souls of men. Yes, the church which does not save always destroys. It will be seen from what I have said that my chief hope for the persuasion of the sceptical and indifferent lies in the spiritual sphere—in presenting to them not the *hortus siccus* of Bibles and arguments, but the sweet flower of living and joyful Christianity. The argument against the Bible rises in popular force—as when Amalek prevailed—when the hands of Moses cease to hold aloft the rod of God—that rod which smote Egypt, divided the Red Sea, and brought forth waters in the desert. When the preachers of the Gospel are full of faith, really believe what they preach, whether that be fashionable or not—when they are full of the sense of Divine power and love present with them—they hold aloft the symbol of Amalek's infallible discomfiture. We need no vile compliance with vulgar tastes, no comic gospels, (the skilled artisans of England abhor preaching and lecturing which is not intensely serious and manly), we need nothing but the Bible, fairly, honestly explained; the world's history, ancient and modern, honestly told; hymns, like Charles Wesley's, that move our own hearts, and no other; good singing, open churches—at least on some evenings—a loving and earnest welcome, and, above all, a life in the church members which looks as if they believed it all; and then the people will come, and they will thank you for what you teach them as you have never been thanked before. But when all is said, I admit that we cannot depend wholly on character in our time to commend Christianity. Its brightness is not sufficient to persuade men. In the lack of such winning character, we must have a reserve force in a positive representation of the evidence of the Gospel, and in a faithful representation of the Gospel itself. Jesus Christ is at once Christianity and its best Evidence, and He who is King of the ages is able to conquer even modern scepticism, as He opens the kingdom of heaven to all believers. Oh, let us set Him forth "alive after His passion," and we shall gain all sceptics whom God will "account worthy of eternal life." The rest no power of argument or suasion in the universe can touch. "Neither would they be persuaded though one rose from the dead." (Applause.)

HAS CHRISTIANITY ANYTHING TO FEAR?

Rev. Dr. KENNEDY in, dealing with this subject, said: Were I in the habit of making apology I should have to make the apology which my friend Mr. White made for himself. The words which will be read to you immediately have been written since I came to Birmingham. What has Christianity to fear? is the form in which I happen to announce the subject for myself. I answer, Nothing—nothing for itself. I cannot think otherwise, believing that Christianity is of God, that He whose name it bears, once crucified, now glorified, is Head over all things. This is a ground of confidence which will appear to unbelievers little else than a superstition. But unbelievers might be admonished, and timid believers might be emboldened, by the history of the past. In the light of that history we might repeat the exulting strains of the second Psalm, "Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing?" The words of Bishop Butler, written in 1736, have often been quoted "It is come, I know not how, to be taken for granted by many persons, that Christianity is not so much as a subject of inquiry, but that it is now at length discovered to be fictitious. And accordingly they treat it as if in the present age this were an agreed point among all people of discernment, and nothing remained but to set it up as a principal subject of mirth and ridicule, as it were by the way of reprisals for its having so long interrupted the pleasures of the world." I find another defender of the faith, Humphrey Ditton, writing a

quarter of a century earlier, describing them in colours, if possible, darker still: "To call all revealed religion into question is now-a-days almost as necessary a step towards the completing of a gentleman, as nice breeding and behaviour, or a good dress. And he that can't, at least, doubt and demur whether the prophets and apostles were not mere deluded enthusiasts or wicked designing impostors, makes as ill a figure in a genteel modish company, as he that wears a habit that has been out of use for two or three centuries. A wretch that can scarcely hammer out the sense of an author of the lowest class (perhaps in his own native tongue), sets up nowadays for a critic upon the Gospel; and every little tyro that is just advancing to his first degree in mathematics, thinks he is able to demonstrate all to be a cheat." These words were written in the year that our Queen Anne, the last of our true Stuarts, died. It was a dark age that, one of the darkest in the history of English Protestantism. But if there had been a prophet in the land, he might have said to those who trembled for their faith as Elisha's servant trembled when he saw the Syrian host compassing the city with horses and chariots, "Fear not; for they that be with us are more than they which be with them." In answer to the prophet's prayer, the eyes of his servant were opened, and he saw, and "behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha." It has ever been so. There are powers which the unopened eye of sense does not perceive round about the ark of religion. And many years had not passed after Ditton and Butler wrote their "Lamentations," before these unseen powers were unveiled, and England returned in a measure to the spiritual life and love of the age of the Puritans. How this was brought about is one of the most notable stories of our English faith, but I cannot tell it now even in the briefest words. Another ground of confidence in our Christianity, apart from our personal faith in its divinity, is to be found in the failure of every successive assault made upon it. In our own memory you well remember how every new assailant of the faith began by assaulting and demolishing his predecessor. Strauss saw, what his contemporaries were beginning to see, not merely the insufficiency but the almost ludicrous absurdity of the rationalistic interpretations of the Gospel records which had satisfied a frivolous generation of critics, or which at least had helped to conceal from themselves the absoluteness of their infidelity. And standing on the ruins of the redoubt from which many had assailed our Christian citadel, he erected another redoubt, which he called the mythical theory, before which he believed that ritual and historical Christianity would soon perish. For a time the mythical theory mystified men. But gradually the smoke began to clear away. And one of the most effective means of dissipating it was the rise of a new enemy of the faith in the person of Doctor Baur, of Tübingen. Strauss, he saw, had failed as completely as Paulus and other rationalists had done to penetrate the secret of Christianity. The true secret before the discovery of which all that was alleged to be supernatural and Divine in Christianity must perish was the fact—the alleged fact—of an essential and irreconcilable divergence between Paul and the three "Pillars," Peter, James, and John. That the Tübingen theory, with all its inferences respecting the growth of our New Testament, has been utterly overthrown so far as argument is concerned by Christian writers, you and I believe. And many of the deductions drawn from it are now surrendered by Baur's own followers. Within the last few months another enemy of the faith has stepped boldly into the arena. And his first act has been to repudiate Paulus, Strauss, Renan, Baur, and all others that have gone before. The mystery that hath been hid from ages has been revealed to him. (Hear, hear.) Listen to his own words:—"At the head of those who have contributed to awaken and keep alive this interest [in the history of Jesus of Nazareth] stand the names of Strauss and Renan; and to this subject these authors, aided by philosophy, have applied, the one the utmost keenness of criticism, and the other the utmost ingenuity of constructive art. Nevertheless, though both are men of thoughtful originality, and possessed of that width of vision and range of culture which are due to intense study and profound scholarship, and while the writings of the one are marked by strength and subtlety of dialectic, and those of the other by poetic, almost dramatic sensibility and power, there is in both a deficiency, if not a total want of that practical sagacity which is an essential requisite to any trustworthy criticism of matters of fact, such as offer themselves to scientific regard in the debated narratives." Of Strauss's mythical theory Mr. Solomon—for such is this wise man's name—(laughter)—says that it is "unsatisfactory, because it is not historically grounded, and because no authentic historical explanation is supplied to account for the rise and spread of the fervid traditional belief." "Renan's theory," he says, "is as fanciful in conception as that of Strauss, and is formed in equal disregard of historical accuracy. But now at the last, after Jew and Gentile have for eighteen centuries and a half searched in vain for the secret of the delusion or imposition, or whatever it is, by which mankind

have been bewildered, Mr. Solomon has at last succeeded. "Hitherto," he says, "the traditional accounts have only been explicated in a speculative interest; in these pages the first attempt is made to introduce the Christian world to Jesus as known to history before His figure was distorted by popular belief. It is in no spirit of arrogance that this task is undertaken, but rather of unfeigned surprise that the proof the author has to offer, though within the reach of every one, is only now for the first time submitted to the light." (Laughter.) Well it is a matter of "unfeigned surprise" that none of this man's forefathers, lynx-eyed as they have been, and none of Gentile race who have ransacked history to find the means of wounding Christianity, should not have discovered what, it appears is, after all, as plain as A, B, C. Or, perhaps, our surprise should rather be that this man should think he has made a veritable discovery, and should not perceive that he is following, not a true light, but an *ignis fatuus*, which will lead him into the bog, in which, according to himself, so many of his predecessors have found a grave. "That which hath been is that which shall be." (Hear, hear.) Let us beware of the illusion which much of our popular literature would foster, that doubt is, in itself, a good or noble thing—(hear, hear)—the sign of intelligence and freedom—(hear, hear)—while faith is but the petrification of old ideas, the sign of bondage and death. This is an inversion of the truth. We may compassionate the doubter; we may say much to prevent a harsh judgment being pronounced upon him; but to exalt doubt over faith would be to exalt chaos over *kosmos*—(hear, hear)—the discords of the rehearsal over the harmony of the performance, the mysteries of nightmare over the joyous activities of health and wakefulness. History, Biblical and other, tells us of multitudes who, through faith, subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, and turned to flight the armies of the aliens. But where shall we find the noble army of doubters and the story of their noble deeds? If we must relinquish our faith, let us confess at least, that, led by doubt, we are passing into a great darkness, and leaving behind that which, with its beautiful dreams, if they are nothing more, and its hopes and benedictions, made the duties of life easier and its burdens lighter. One word more, in which I venture to repeat what I have said elsewhere. We cannot legitimately or efficiently protect our faith by any accommodation of it to the tastes of its enemies—(applause)—or by the surrender of truths which may be especially obnoxious to them. (Hear, hear.) Sometimes, indeed, we are admonished that we only endanger the citadel by persistently defending outposts of doubtful character. And we may accept the general principle. Only, in practice, we must be well assured what are and what are not doubtful outposts, lest by the surrender to which we are exhorted we throw open the way into the heart of the citadel itself. Or when men exhort us to lighten the ship, lest, through overloading, it should sink, we are haunted with the idea of the possibility of so lightening it, that we shall not be able to keep it afloat through want of ballast. The author of the book, "Supernatural Religion," gives us most significant warning on this subject. He tells us of the profoundly illogical zeal of many distinguished men, who endeavour to arrest for a moment the pursuing wolves of doubt and unbelief, by practically throwing to them, scrap by scrap, the very doctrines which constitute the claims of Christianity to be regarded as a Divine revelation at all." And he adds: "The moral Christianity which they hope to receive, noble though it be, has not one feature left to distinguish it as a miraculously communicated religion? *Fas est ab hoste docere.*" Cerberus will not be satisfied or quieted so long as a fragment of the true faith remains in our hands. And if he were, it is our duty to retain the faith in its integrity. The Christianity with which we have been put in trust, and which alone is the life of men, is the Christianity of the Gospels, and of Paul and John. And it is this and nothing else that we have to defend against all comers. (Applause.)

The CHAIRMAN: I am sure you would wish me in your name to give utterance to your sense of gratitude to the brethren who have so ably addressed us. (Applause.) There must, I think, be something peculiarly healthful and inspiriting in the very air of Birmingham, that we have had papers produced here under its inspiration so interesting, so much to the point, and all so admirably kept within the limits of the time. Though this meeting has been the shortest and the quietest, I think we shall all feel that it has not been the least interesting. ("Hear, hear," and applause.) We shall carry away with us thoughts for our guidance of a most excellent and practical kind, and shall all go forth in our various ways under their direction to perform the work that is now laid upon us in reference to our day and generation.

The CHAIRMAN then pronounced the benediction, and the proceedings closed.

CONTINENTAL AND FOREIGN MISSIONS.

A numerously attended public meeting was held on Tuesday evening last week in the Town Hall, in the interest of Continental and Foreign Missions. Mr. Henry Wright, J.P., occupied the chair. The meeting was opened by the singing of a hymn, and the Rev. CHARLES SLATER, of Manchester, offered prayer.

The CHAIRMAN said: Ladies and gentlemen, the Congregational Union of England and Wales desires by this meeting publicly to express its interest in the aggressive evangelical Protestant work which is now being successfully carried on in France and in various parts of the continent of Europe, and also in foreign missions to civilised and heathen nations; and not only to manifest our interest in the work, but in the most hearty and emphatic manner to express our obligation, our confidence, our gratitude, and our love to that noble band of men and women who, not counting their lives dear unto themselves, have gone forth in the name of Christ and of His churches to the distant parts of the earth to speak of the unsearchable riches of Christ. (Applause.) Both departments of this work will be ably represented here to-night by the men you see around me. I shall only stand for a very few minutes between you and those to whom you are doubtless impatient to listen, and whom this night, I am sure, you will delight to honour. It is not often that such a glorious opportunity as this is offered to us of expressing our interest in continental missions and foreign missions at the same time. I have noticed with satisfaction that a somewhat similar arrangement has found its place on the programme of the Church Congress, the Baptist Union, the Wesleyan Methodist Conference, and the General Assemblies of the Free Church, and the Established Church of Presbyterians in Scotland, which seems plainly to indicate that the interest in the spread of Christ's Kingdom the wide world over is becoming more universal, and that the churches will not rest until the Gospel has been sent to the uttermost parts of the earth, and all the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God. (Applause.) I turn first to our friend, Mr. McAll—(applause)—whose work has excited so much interest all over the land. Many of us have read of it in our homes, and in our families, and in our churches, while others who have journeyed through the Continent, and have stopped for a little while in Paris, have availed themselves of the opportunities of seeing with their own eyes that wonderful work, and have come back to testify, with gladness and with gratitude, of its extent, of its power, of its genuineness, and of its value. (Applause.) I believe that Mr. McAll's work is unique. He was not sent to it by man; he was not sent to it by any society; but he was called to it by his God, who set before him an open door and gave him grace to enter it, not knowing where it would lead him. Like every other good work in the world, it has been one of growth, and it is my peculiar privilege to tell you, my friends, to-night, that Mr. McAll has just opened his twenty-fourth station in the city of Paris. (Applause.) And, better than this, he has been able to open other stations in Boulogne, in Lyons, in Marseilles, and, I believe, in other parts of the Continent. He has been permitted to labour in districts of Paris which were only known to us by the deeds of violence perpetrated in them in times of great political excitement and revolution. Prefects, Roman Catholic priests, and gendarmes have done their best and their worst for generations; but it has been reserved for our friend, this servant of the Prince of Peace, to win the confidence of the people, to lead them to commit themselves to his teaching, to his influence, to his example, and to lead them into happier courses. We are to listen also this evening to another very remarkable man, Signor Varnier, who also seems to me to have been called, by the providence of God, to do a very remarkable work in Sicily. Of course Signor Varnier is not so well known to us as Mr. McAll. Some of you will be ready to ask, "Who is Signor Varnier?" We have never heard of him before." Well, his forefathers (not his own father) were Jews; they were banished from Spain and found a home in Sicily, where our friend was born. He was trained as a Roman Catholic, and went out to India as a Roman Catholic missionary. While labouring to convert others he became converted himself—(applause)—and after a little while, after the genuineness of his conversion was proved, he made a public recantation of his errors, and was received into the Episcopal Church by Bishop Cotton, of Calcutta. (Applause.) He laboured as a Protestant missionary then in India for ten years, but hearing of the grand openings which God had made in his own country, he returned to it, bringing with him one who had been, like himself, a Roman Catholic priest, but had been converted by his instruc-

mentality, and these two men find that they, too, have an open door in that country, and are permitted to go about itinerating from one part to the other, and are welcomed by the people, and that amongst two millions of people in one of the most degraded and ignorant parts of Italy. Our friend needs support. He at present does not belong to any society; therefore, in such a great and glorious work, of course places suitable for the gatherings of the people must be found, and he needs, and is entitled to, our support. This is only a sample of the openings which are presented to us in various parts of the Continent of Europe. I am ashamed to say we have an Evangelical Continental Society which could do an immense amount of good and glorious work, if only we put the means into its hands to enable it to accomplish that work. (Applause.) I hope, as the result of what you will hear from these men, we shall all be encouraged to render that useful Society, which is mainly dependent on ourselves, the support it needs. The work of the London Missionary Society will be very ably represented to-night by Mr. Macfarlane. (Applause.) He, I find, needs no introduction. You know that he is trying to open up, with a noble band of fellow workers, the Island of New Guinea—the largest island in the world—to open it up to the Gospel, and to all the blessings that follow in the train of the Gospel. Amongst the blessings of civilisation I may also mention those of commerce, but for that we must wait a little. Some enterprising men, with good motives, I believe, but too impatient, not waiting for the fulness of time, presumed to enter upon the island in two parts of it, notwithstanding the strong protests of the Missionaries; and as the result they speedily met with a cruel death. As chairman of a public meeting I am deprived of the luxury of speaking at any length on other parts of the mission field in connection with the London Missionary Society; but I may just say that in China and in India, and in other parts we are at the present time receiving very great encouragements. I have always believed in the success of Indian missions, but my belief has been much strengthened by having been permitted to listen to a converted Brahmin priest of high caste, who, in the church in which I worship at Kensington, stood up and preached the gospel of Christ clad in his priestly robes, wearing a turban which he reverently raised at the time of prayer. If he had been here, and had been permitted to stand in the place which Mr. Eustace Conder occupied so nobly last night, and had pleaded with you for our countrymen or for his own, you would have found your belief in the success of Indian Missions greatly strengthened. In China, notwithstanding all the exclusiveness of that remarkable people, a Viceroy of a certain district has lately cast aside his prejudices, called in the aid of some medical missionaries, and seeing that the medical work was successful, has set apart a portion of a memorial temple for the use of the mission, and made an offering of money to the value of £60 for the purpose of purchasing drugs for the use of the mission. (Applause.) Our mission in the South Seas has been blessed with wonderful success. I do not wish to daunt your zeal, but I am able to say that it is almost—and under pressure I believe it would be quite—self-supporting. Apart from the cost of the missionary ship, I believe the extensive mission in the South Seas might be made self-supporting. Just one word about Madagascar. We have not only taught and christianised the people, but we have taken up their whole nature, and men who were formerly slaves, obliged to work by forced labour, are now taught to make bricks and build houses to dwell in; and not that only, but they are enabled to fell trees, convert the timber, frame a roof and all necessary parts of the building, and to erect temples for the worship of God and His blessed Son all by free labour. (Applause.) Twenty years ago this hall and Carr's-lane Chapel were amongst the most familiar places in the world to me. I have many times sat here with some of the greatest and best men of that day who have been called to their rest; amongst others, I need not mention the name of John Angell James—(applause)—whose eloquence upon Missionary topics has been so often heard within these walls. You remember his enthusiasm for China, and his scheme for sending a million of New Testaments to China. Amongst others with whom I have had the honour of standing here, I may mention David Livingstone. Now, my friends, you and all of us are engaged in a mission which will perpetuate the memory of David Livingstone, and turn his life's work to good account. Already we have given our money, and some very precious lives to this work, and although a very few years have passed away, there is now a band of Missionary Societies at work, Presbyterians at one end, we in the middle lake, and the Episcopalians at the other, all working most harmoniously for the opening up of that dark continent. Already a company formed upon the joint stock principle in England has been established which, in a short time, will be prepared to carry our goods from Liverpool up to our own station at Ujiji. And so in a very few years I hope, in this hall, the glad

tidings of success from that part of the world will be told, and that that success will prove to have been as great as in any other part of the Missionary world. (Applause.) And now may I not, in the name of the Congregational Union of England and Wales, and in your name, offer your congratulations to my friend Mr. McAll, and very earnestly express our hope and prayer that his precious life may be long preserved to carry on this good work for the benefit of France? (Applause.)

EVANGELICAL MISSION IN PARIS.

The Rev. R. W. McALL, F.L.S., of Paris, who was greeted with loud applause, said:—Mr. Wright, my dear brethren in the ministry, my Christian friends,—Need I say that I am profoundly touched by the welcome which you have given me? I feel myself entirely unworthy of it, but I accept it in the name of my blessed Lord and Master, and I desire to use the stimulus given to me by such a kind and hearty welcome for His glory. Engaged as I am in a work for our Master in another country, a work wholly undenominational, I cannot stand here without deep emotion—here among my own people, in this great assembly representing the Church of my fathers. Need I restrain the utterance which is prompted alike by earliest memories and by the retrospect of many happy years spent in England. I love our Congregational churches; I love their combined freedom and fraternity; and I desire to spend my days as I commenced them in this dear fellowship—here where my kindred have dwelt and still dwell, where God the Saviour reigns, the King and Head of His universal Church. Exactly eight years have passed since at Nottingham, in the assembly of this Union, I was permitted to speak of the beginnings of our mission among the working men of Paris and of France. I then spoke of the call addressed to us to leave pastorate and home and country—addressed to us on the very spot which had but just been signalised by hatred and carnage and fire, when the unknown workman of Belleville was to us, indeed, like the man of Macedonia, saying, "Come over and help us." During the years that have elapsed, we have never had one regret in obeying the call. If any sacrifice has been involved, it has been a sacrifice that we accounted it a privilege and an honour to make; and our hearts rejoice when we think that the very fact of such a sacrifice and separation being involved may have been the means of commanding our message to those to whom we have spoken. Great progress has been made in the work of disseminating the Bible and preaching the Gospel in Paris and in various parts of France, not alone by the instrumentality connected with the mission with which I am connected, but through other channels of Christian effort. It is not too much to say that all over France there are very many persons who are waiting and asking for the preaching of Christ. We dare not say that a multitude of hearts are as yet prepared to receive Him; but there are a multitude of ears open to receive the glad tidings in the way of intelligence, who wish to know what the Gospel of Christ really is as contrasted with superstition, idolatry, and infidelity. Meanwhile, it is our unspeakable privilege to rejoice over many individual hearts won to Jesus. M Réveilland, who has just crossed the Atlantic in company with my esteemed colleague, the Rev. Geo. Dodd, on a mission for his own country in the Western world, is not the only gifted Frenchman who during recent times has left the school of Voltaire to enter the school of Jesus of Nazareth. (Applause.) And we can ourselves point to a little faithful band of young Frenchmen who have emerged from the dark mazes of scepticism, and from the worldliness in which they have lived and are now seeking to preach the Saviour, whom they have received when attending in our humble mission-room. The great religious characteristic in France at the present day is the spirit of inquiry. Men wish to know whether a religion of reality, simplicity, and earnestness really exists, and we wish, by God's help, to answer the question. But the enemy is at work. The enemies of religion have seized the opportunity afforded by the revolt of the people against Jesuitism and priesthood to find weapons for a fierce and dire campaign against all religion. They blot out the very name of Deity, they vow to exterminate the very idea of a future life and the immortality of the human soul. The enemy is indeed seeking to come in like the great water floods. Oh! may the Spirit of the Lord lift up against him His all-conquering standard. (Applause.) Let me mention one circumstance as illustrating the closeness of this conflict. Last May, in one of the large halls in Paris, a favourite resort of free-thinkers, a crowd of persons was listening to a discourse delivered by a municipal councillor of Paris (another councillor being the President), attacking religious systems. The speaker begins by assailing priesthood and fanaticism, and he then goes on to dispose summarily of what he calls "religious dogma." Applause to the echo throughout the great hall. Then he goes on further, and taking in his hand a copy of the Bible, proceeds to un-

fold what he terms its contradictions and evil teachings, and, as a grand climax, he violently closes the book, and pushing it away from him, says, "I counsel you never to open it; it is a worthless book; never look upon its pages again." He pauses. Boisterous applause? No, no! Silence, silence as of death, throughout the hall. (Applause.) In that very seat of Satan, where not a solitary voice could be raised in the name of Jesus Christ, the silence was expressive. It told, at least, that many of those who were there felt that there were wants which could only be supplied from that book which the lecturer had dared to denounce. Thus God's blessed book asserted its own innate power, and gained a glorious victory. Now, how are we to carry on this conflict? By diffusing the Bible and preaching Christ throughout the country. Oh, that our zeal might equal and surpass ten-fold the terrible and fiery zeal of these men, who vow to blot out the very name of our Saviour and our God! (Applause.) I am reminded of the words spoken to me two or three months ago by an old house-painter in Paris, whom I found engaged in painting the words *entrée libre* (free admission) over the door of our 24th station in Paris: "Sir, we workmen will give you a hearty welcome if you will come and speak to us freely, without asking us for money, and tell us about Jesus Christ and the true consolation. We want to be taught." Let us, then, in Christ's name, go forth and teach them. But we must be very patient and very persevering. When speaking in France we cannot, as in England, conclude that there is a response to our words in the conscience of almost every hearer. Conscience is asleep among the masses of the people—it is dead. They have been led to look upon religion from a wrong point of view; they have no idea of the real needs of man's soul; and hence, when you speak to them of "righteousness and temperance and judgment to come," they do not at first even understand your meaning. They need "line upon line, line upon line." An intelligent man once said to my colleague, Mr. Dodds, who was expressing his astonishment that people were so slow to receive the Gospel, "Oh, sir, you do not understand how it is with us; you do not know how we have been deceived in regard to all these subjects; we are only beginning to learn bit by bit." On the occasion of the opening of our first mission station in Lyons a man with a black face came to me—he was a stoker—evidently with deep feeling, and said, "I have always felt that there was something within me which cannot die, but never in my life until this night was it explained to me. I shall go to my work, and think over what I have heard at the meeting, and it will help me to light my furnace." One day three stalwart men entered one of our little stations, who had been attending the funeral of the atheist Raspail. At first they seemed inclined to mock, but they remained to listen. When the meeting was over they came and warmly grasped my hand, and said, "Open, if possible, meetings like this all over Paris; for the Parisians have very wrong ideas in regard to Jesus Christ, and they need to be set right. What we have heard this afternoon is the truth respecting Him; oh, preach it throughout Paris!" Let me give you an instance of the way in which the ignorant and lower classes regard these things, and how little they understand them. One evening in our meeting place in the Rue de Rivoli, two workmen in their blouses came to me, and, shaking me by the hand, one of them said, "Sir, thank you, this is very entertaining; it is better than going to the *carbaret*." His comrade added: "It saves us a glass, and it leaves no trouble behind." One of our kind Christian friends, a lady, was speaking to a poor woman at a meeting of *chiffonniers*, or rag-gatherers, and asking her who were the people that go to heaven, she replied, "Ce sont les Français, n'est ce pas?" Oh! would that all French people might find their way to heaven! Such is the mighty work to be done, and such are some of the difficulties. Who is to achieve it? That is the great question. Can the French people do it alone? I have heard many dear friends in England say, "You ought to leave it to the French Christians." Can they do it? Let me pay a tribute to our French brethren, the pastors and members of the church, our faithful allies in the work of evangelisation. Nearly sixty resident pastors in Paris lend me their aid most willingly. They have a band of evangelists, students for the ministry, and men of business, too; and they have formed a committee in Paris of their own accord, connected with our mission, for two objects—to collect contributions, and also to aid us by arranging, in a definite manner, for working with us. But can they do the work alone? It was my profound conviction that the Christians of England and America must go on giving their money, and send their ablest workers into those vast continental lands—not France alone—that they may be pervaded by Gospel teaching. Take the case of Ireland. In that country about one-fourth of the population are Protestants, but in France the proportion is only one in 40, or at most one in 35. If then Ireland requires help, how much more France! I call upon you, then, to remember that your Master Himself appeals to you. Shall it be that you will go enjoying your own peaceful Sabbaths,

your Bibles and your Christian privileges, while there are multitudes of men who have the same needs as those living at a few miles distance, and who may be said not to possess these Sabbaths, these Bibles, and these privileges? Permit me to say a few words upon the recent history of our mission. When I spoke eight years ago at Nottingham, we had four stations in Paris with 330 sittings. We have now 24 stations, widely diffused, from the Rue de Rivoli in the centre of Paris to the remotest faubourgs—25 rooms with over 5,000 sittings. We have also lately adopted a plan of hiring from time to time large ball-rooms and concert rooms, well situated for a series of Gospel meetings. We opened a great hall a few weeks ago in the Rue St. Antoine which has been crowded every evening by persons anxious to listen to the faithful efforts of the excellent M. Theodore Monod and other speakers. It is indeed thrilling to hear the beautiful Gospel hymns sung, where only jesting, ribaldry, and profanity were heard before. Then there is another feature. Some of our good young men go out into the dark and benighted villages a distance from Paris, and hold meetings in some suitable room and preach the Gospel to the people. We have also adult Bible classes at most of our principal stations, many of which are conducted by the neighbouring pastors. Thus there is a very precious link formed between our mission stations and the surrounding churches. I will not attempt to speak of our Sunday schools, our Bible and tract distributions, and so on. In Lyons we have five stations, with 800 sittings; in Bordeaux four stations, with 600 sittings; in Boulogne-sur-Mer two stations; in La Rochelle and Rochefort one station each. We are also establishing a large missions at Lisle and other places. Indeed the call reaches us almost daily, "Come over and help us." But what are we among so many? Perhaps most of all we rejoice because similar Christian enterprises on a similar model have been springing up around us. We have in Paris the work of our pioneering evangelist, the excellent and venerable pastor, Armand Delille. Then there is the medical mission, which has been so much blessed; and we have also numerous schools and classes. There is the work of our Wesleyan and our Baptist brethren, and there is a new Paris City Mission which promises good things in days to come. Then beyond this, M. Rovélla, of whom I have already spoken, has been carrying on his work, and there is the Mission Intérieure, the Société Evangélique, and the Société Centrale. Those who are aided by the Geneva Society, by the Evangelical Continental Society, and the Foreign Evangelisation Society, are conveying the tidings of salvation to people who never heard the Gospel before in hundreds of places throughout France. Yet there remains much land to be possessed. There are whole Departments of France in which not a simple evangelistic agency exists. A great work indeed remains to be done. The other day Mrs. McAll and I were permitted to visit our branch mission in Lyons. We saw our excellent and disinterested friends, M. and Madame de Watteville, at their work. He has given himself voluntarily to be a director of the work, having left his bank and business in the town of Berne for this purpose. At each of the other four stations, which had been opened previously, one and another, and especially the heads of families, came forward, desiring to shake us by the hand in token of their gratitude to God for the opening of those humble rooms, in which, as they testified, they had found the Saviour of their souls; and amongst these people was my friend the stoker, who had washed his face and put on his best clothes. (Applause.) I wish I could take you with me to our other stations—to Rochefort, for example, where we have a little room that will only seat 150, but where 400 persons had assembled, and you might have heard stalwart workmen trying to sing our hymns, such as

"Dites moi l'histoire
De l'amour de Jésus."

On the same journey Mrs. McAll and I went to a remote place, where we supposed we were wholly unknown; but a young Breton painter and author saluted us, and told us, that when he lived in Paris he had regularly attended the *réunion* in the Rue de Monge, one of my own stations. He added that he had never heard the young men who conducted the services indulge in words of harshness or bitterness. Roman Catholic as he was, he said they never uttered a word to grieve or wound the feelings; and he should always feel grateful for what he had heard fall from their lips. How many are there who, like this young Breton, pass from our view, but who carry with them some precious seeds of immortal truth to spring up in years to come! Brethren, we are but a small and feeble band in comparison with the serried ranks that are arrayed under the banners of superstition and infidelity. But enough for us that the Lord of Hosts is for us. Welcome to us whatever part He may assign to us in this great campaign! We take as our post of honour that of the humble pioneer, to clear the rough ground and prepare the way for His advancing host. What is it to us whether ours be the work of seed-time or of ingathering? We shall all be equally reapers there on high. And in the

hour of darkness and discouragement it is our privilege to catch the accents of that voice which we have learned to know and love, sweeter than the hymns of angels, mightier than the noise of many waters. "He that soweth and he that reapeth shall rejoice together." Let those that sow in sadness wait till the fair harvest comes. They shall

"Confess their sheaves are great,
And shout a blessing home."

Yes, dear friends, we will shout them home to dear old England. (Loud applause.)

GOSPEL WORK IN SICILY.

Signor VARNIER (of Messina): Mr. Chairman, ladies, and gentlemen—I hope that I shall be able to make myself understood, and I ask your indulgence for my foreign accent, being an Italian, born and bred in Sicily. So long as twenty-seven years ago I left the shores of my own land, in order to devote my life and my energies as a Roman Catholic priest, having been ordained, and having taken my degrees in Rome, that I might go and preach to the heathen the doctrines of the Roman Catholic Church, which I firmly and sincerely believed to be the real and the true religion of Jesus Christ, and at the same time to draw the poor Protestants, whom I thought to be out of the pale of the Church, and consequently out of eternal salvation, to what I thought to be the light of the Church which taught the truth of God. I was leaving, as our chairman informed you, as a Roman Catholic priest, to go to India; and there, after a few years, coming into contact with the Protestants, and seeing that they were earnest, religious, charitable, devoted people, I began to wonder how I could have been told in my own country that Protestantism was the very incarnation of wickedness; that Protestant doctrines were destructive of the doctrines of Christ; and that the leaders of Protestantism—the Reformers—were nothing else than men who had given themselves up to every licentiousness, and that to free themselves from the restraints of the church they ran into heresy carrying with them the peoples and the nations to whom they preached their errors. Realising that among the Protestants there was faith, charity, earnestness, sincere love, I began to tremble, lest, perhaps, instead of being in the truth, I was in error, and lest they whom I considered heretics might be in the truth of God. And whilst I was endeavouring to qualify myself to lead them to what I thought to be the truth, God opened my eyes, and I saw the truth as it is in Christ Jesus. By the study of the word of God, and by prayer, and by the very arguments that I was using to convince them of error, it pleased God to show me the truth; and he gave me grace to stand by it, and to embrace it. (Applause.) I began to realise the grand difference between an external religion and the religion of Jesus Christ which appeals to the heart. One is external. It affects man in his outward relations, and it is looked upon as a slavish service. The other appeals to the heart, and makes one realise the relation that exists between the soul and God. When I began to realise the vast difference between the two, I earnestly longed to return to my own land and preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ to my own people; not that they did not know Jesus Christ; they knew of Jesus Christ and they knew of Him, but it is as something beyond and above them. The difference is, that the Roman Church, whilst it holds the doctrines of redemption, and has more than the doctrines of redemption, yet it puts them aside and renders them of none effect; whereas the doctrines of the Gospel touch the heart and bring forth the sweet relation that exists between our soul and God. Religion in my own poor land is really in a very sad condition. People there know nothing of the soul of religion. They know simply the externals of it. Religion is not looked upon as personal tie between God and our soul—between the redeemed soul and the Redeemer; but it is looked upon rather as a code of social laws—as a something that binds us externally; and, at the same time, instead of giving consolation and joy to the heart, it impresses one with fear and trembling. This idea has been derived from the fact that the word of God has never been given to them; and human ideas have been propagated instead of the word of God. The consequence is that men have not got the divine idea, and do not realize their relation to God. But perhaps this may be external to my subject. You, as believers, to whom I appeal, know very well that unless religion is felt in the heart, it cannot be spoken in the mouth. It was precisely this dead state of things that I deplored when I longed to return to my own native land. At the time, it was impossible for me to go to Italy, that country being shut out from the blessing of freedom and the liberty of conscience; yet it was my hearty prayer that the Lord might grant me grace to return to that land, and that there, among my own relatives and my friends and college companions and brother priests, I should have the consolation and the privilege of preaching the simple religion of the Gospel—the mes-

sage of love, which the Redeemer delivered to His apostles, and they to the nations of the world; and of telling them that Christ was not the stern Judge which must be entreated through mediators, but the loving Shepherd of our souls, and that there was no one intervening between us and Christ, and that He loved us so much that He gave His own precious blood to ransom us. I wanted to tell them the joy that I felt in seeing God as my Saviour in Christ. God granted me this three years after my conversion; and in the year 1863 I landed in Messina, and I was the first native of the land who dared to preach the doctrines of the Gospel publicly, in opposition to the doctrines of the church of Rome. I went among my friends and companions. I felt that I owed them an explanation. I had been called an apostate, a heretic, an excommunicated renegade; and I presented myself before them and said, "Brethren; I have come to tell you the reasons why I left the Church of Rome. I have not left the church of Jesus Christ, nay, I have returned to the Church of Christ. I have only left the errors of Rome. I love you because you are my kinsmen, my countrymen. Though you call me a heretic, a renegade, let me protest before you that, according to what you call a heresy, I worship the God of our fathers, and I preach nothing else but what Christ has delivered to his blessed apostles and what the apostles delivered to all the world; and here I am ready to give you the reason of the faith that is in me." That was the first spark that was lighted there. A patient hearing was given me, and soon a few friends gathered in small room, and I began to lecture. That room was too small. We had a larger one, and before the fourth lecture had been delivered a few of them had come forward to say, "Friend, you are right, and we stand by you, for you give us not the word of man but the Word of God—(applause)—and by this Word we stand." After this I was challenged to a public controversy, which I accepted. The reverend director of the Royal Lyceum of Messina was selected from among 400 priests as my opponent. I held my Bible in my hand, and, standing in the midst of the assembly, I had the glory to confess the Lord Jesus Christ, and to preach before them the Divine truth of the Gospel. A short time after, those who had heard me wished to open a Christian service in their own musical language. At the first meeting twenty-five attended. The services were continued every Sunday, and more and more would come to hear the Word. At this time, as the work was increasing, I had inquirers both from the laity and from the priests. The priests came at the night season, asking what they should do. Of course, the laity came in the day-time. I required a helper, and the Lord raised one in a most wonderful way, an excellent friend of the name of Scutari. Thinking that he was right, and that the Roman Catholic Church was the Church of God (just as I thought before) he boldly came to me and reproached me, saying that I had sold my soul to the devil, and that I had dared to come into that land in order to snatch the sheep of Christ from the true fold of the Church, and make them members of the synagogue of Satan. I said, "I deserve this language, for I, too, once held similar language against those that left the Church of Rome." The Lord granted that, after three or four weeks of amicable conversation and controversy with me, his mind was opened. He could see the truth, and the last meeting was a very solemn one. I said to him, "Now I will have all the counsel of God before you. You have nothing more to urge in favour of your church. The responsibility remains between you and your Master. Men cannot intervene. Therefore, now act according to your conscience." And when I said so he stood up with the tears in his eyes, and said, "Brother, what am I to do. I wish to confess my love to my Master, Jesus, cost what it may, and though I have to beg my bread. Tell me brother, what to do." From that day this dear brother has been the companion of my labours, going and preaching the Gospel from village to village, from town to town. The requirements of Italy are not to change the form. We require inner religion for them. It is not so much whether I put on this dress, or put on a cope. I told a priest only a month ago that if I were allowed to preach Christ and the blessed gospel of salvation I would not mind even putting on a cope. What we want in Italy is real, earnest faith, the religion of the heart, communion with our God through Christ, and men whose hearts are warmed by the love of God. The evil of the Roman Catholic religion is, I am sorry to say, that it is only a shell without the kernel. It is like a tree which I had in my garden in India, which had been eaten inside by the white ants, and there was only the bark to hold up the trunk. I do not say so to accuse my friends and brethren, the Roman Catholics, whom I love. I speak of the system, I do not speak of individuals. Among them there are earnest, good men, who would sacrifice their lives. They only require enlightenment; and this can be done by the blessed word of the Gospel spoken in faith and in charity. It is not by controversy, brethren. It is by the warm love that comes from Christ and spreads throughout. (Applause.) We who are aware of the difficulties of Roman Catholics, carry on the work not to plant a denomination or

the Protestant Church, so called, but real Christianity. The word "Protestant" has been so misrepresented in my country, that by the word "Protestant" is meant something that is godless, abominable, and impious. This is the reason why we avoid the name. Our work is to go from village to village, and from town to town, and there, in conversation, tell the truth of God to the people. When the people hear the word of God spoken in their hearts warm up. When we meet a man in the course of our evangelisation, and begin to speak of the love of Christ and of salvation through Him, he listens most attentively; and then he says, "Sir, we have not known these things. Will you kindly come to my village and tell my family these very things?" Very often we find ourselves surrounded by people who, when they hear the promises of eternal life and of the precious atoning blood that cleanseth from all sin, without their paying money and without passing through purgatory, seem so astonished, that they say, "How is it possible that we have not known these things?" Not long ago, a man who had believed the Word of God, and had attended our preaching, and had been enlightened, was taken to task by his friends for having turned Protestant. He said, "When I was a drunkard and blasphemous, I was very good; and now that I have left off cursing and swearing, and I am sober, and go to hear the Word of the Lord on Sunday, you call me a Protestant. Well, if such it is to be a Protestant, you, too, should be all Protestants." (Applause.) The people are inquiring and thirsting for the word of God, wherever you go; and in several towns where the Gospel has found its way, it is astonishing to find that, by the reading of some portions of the Gospels, people have become Christians of themselves. A gentleman from Aquilla told me on the steamer from Messina to Naples, not longer than a fortnight before, "Sir, I am a Protestant. I have become an evangelical man merely by reading the word of God; and I wish that the Gospels could be distributed and make their way through the breadth and length of the land." Another gentleman from Parma told me that he and his wife had become Protestants, and had turned from superstition to Christ, and loved and served God, simply through the reading of the Bible. Now, friends and brethren, it is really a great pleasure to me to find myself in this assembly, and to see so many Christian men earnestly intent in carrying on the Master's work, and sympathising with our difficulties. Several good priests who have come to us, and who wish to co-operate, are unable to do so, because the moment they renounce their allegiance to the Church of Rome they are thrown into the streets. If they have professorships they cannot hold them any longer; and if they hold anything for their livelihood, they must give it up. Hence, many who earnestly wish to leave the Church of Rome, and give themselves to the work, cannot do it. Very often they tell us, "We are convinced, but what can we do under these difficulties?" They require our earnest prayers. Our answer to them is, "Brethren, if you are convinced, before God, that this is the way that leads to life, you are responsible before Him. You should leave father and mother and relatives, and all, and give yourselves to the Lord." But it is very well to say so. The difficulties are great and many. Just now Christianity is being attacked on every side. We who have the work of the Gospel to carry on require strength and support not only in material means, but much more in sympathy and love and prayer. We do not know what times may come. Just now we are enjoying freedom and liberty, and we have access to every village and every house. Our Roman Catholic brethren attend the reading of the Word of God and prayer in our little meetings. Yet there is a power working against the Gospel, and trying to check our work. Those that attend our meetings have been made the objects of indirect persecution. They require great strength and energy in order that they may continue their faithfulness to the Word of God. Will you remember them in prayer? Some are rejected by their relatives, and the cold shoulder is given to them by others. Some are left out in the streets without employment. Do, for God's sake, remember them in prayer; and pray that we, too, may be made successful throughout the land of Italy, to bring back the Gospel of the Lord Jesus, that there may be one Church, and that we may be united in love and the simplicity of faith, and that you and we may have, hereafter, the joy of being reunited in the greater Church in heaven! May the Lord grant that we in Italy may have congregations full of faith, and united with you in love and sympathy, though of a different language and a different nation! The family of Christ is not a political society or corporation. It is the family of God, the head of whom is Christ Jesus, and we are all brethren. The wall of partition has been thrown down by Jesus Christ, and we are members one of another. May the Lord grant that this may be realised by us; and may He help His cause and promote the spread of His kingdom, so that when He comes He may gather His elect from all tribes and nations; and may our lot be to find ourselves among those whom He will gather near Himself to give them an eternal inheritance! (Applause.)

MR. MACFARLANE ON FOREIGN MISSIONARY WORK.

Rev. S. MACFARLANE, of New Guinea, said: A friend of mine stated as his firm conviction, a little while ago, that he thought the millennium was coming. It was just after the Election. (Laughter.) It seems that the Conservative Member that we had in Bedford, who was a military man, had handed over his sword to James Howard, who was going to make a ploughshare of it. (Laughter.) I am afraid for the millennium that it was given up just a little, too reluctantly. But my hopes are revived again, because the Congregational Union seems to be getting so near perfect that I fancy the millennium cannot be far off, after all. It is a very encouraging thing for us as missionaries to find that both within and without the Church there is some regard paid now to missionary work. We find that within the Church it is regarded as quite an essential part of ecclesiastical life, and that outsiders, too, speak of missions as a highly characteristic and significant phenomenon of the present day. We find Government acknowledging the advantage which missionaries have been, and men of science, including such men as Max Müller and Darwin himself, and merchants and political economists, they all recognise the benefits of missionaries in these days. That is a comfort to a missionary. Well, I think the time has come when the missionaries of the London Missionary Society ought to have a permanent place on the platform of the Congregational Union. (Applause.) I know very well that the founders of that society were tall enough, both Churchmen and Dissenters, to stretch over the barriers of denominationalism; but, then, the fact is, that it has come practically to belong to the Congregational body, and it is a society that the Congregational Union need not be ashamed of. (Applause.) We know very well that it is undenominational—at least, it is reported to be so. (Laughter.) There is the fundamental principle yet. Being founded by these Churchmen and Dissenters, it is, of course, lifted up above all "isms." It is broad as Protestantism itself, as far as that goes, and it leaves its missionaries free, as the first propagators of Christianity, to carry the Gospel to the heathen, and we rejoice in that liberty. (Applause.) I am not so sure that we could not teach you a lesson even here. You think the Congregational system the most perfect in the world. You should come out to the mission field. If you were to come out to us, and see us guiding and stimulating our native teachers, you would think, perhaps, that we were coming the bishop over them, and that we were Episcopalians. And then if you were to see us at our annual meetings, met together for conducting our business, you might think that we were Presbyterians; and if you were to see our preaching plans, and our staff of local preachers and our class meetings, you would think, perhaps, we were Wesleyans; and if some of our Baptist brethren had seen me baptizing 95 adults before I left, they might have thought, perhaps, I was a Baptist—(laughter)—but I dare say they would think that I might have used a little more water. (Laughter.) The fact is, we are eclectic. (Applause.) We are members of the London Missionary Society, a society that has reaped rich harvest in every part of the world, that has its missionaries almost in every heathen land, and that has many very distinguished names associated with it; and therefore I say it seems to me just about time that that society had a permanent place on the platform of your meetings. (Applause.) I have been asked to represent that society here, and by relating a little of my experience of the last 22 years, to try and deepen your sympathies and arouse your enthusiasm in the work of this great society. Now I am going to be very orthodox and arrange what I have to say under three heads, and first there is my experience at the Mission House. (Laughter.) Nobody can be expected to be very enthusiastic about any society unless he is satisfied that that society is well conducted. Now I do not mind confessing to you that there was a time when I, in company with some of my brethren, thought that perhaps it might have been a little better than it was; but then about eight years ago I was brought into close contact with them. You will remember when I came home to get the little steamer and the paraphernalia from the new Congo mission. Being on the ship committee, I managed to come into close contact with the work of the Mission House. I saw a number of the directors, and formed a personal acquaintance with them, and my experience has been this that I believe there is not a society in the world better conducted than the London Missionary Society. (Applause.) I think there is a deep debt of gratitude that we owe to these London business men like our chairman here—(applause)—who devote so much of their precious time to the committees. It is not easy work at the Mission House; if I do not believe in it it is because I do not know it, and these men, they come to the Mission House, and devote the best of their time—they become acquainted with all the different sections of the mission field, and we owe them a debt of gratitude, for that is a large subscription to the London Missionary Society. (Hear,

hear.) Of course, they are sharp, shrewd, business men, and of course we may expect that they have an eye to quick returns and a result, and so on. I remember when I went out to the mission field my friend gave me, amongst other things, a homeopathic chest of medicine; but the director, amongst the outfit, gave me a small cask of Epsom salts. (Laughter.) My experience amongst the churches has been this—thus you see I am going rapidly, this is the second head already—that whilst they regard missions as a part of the organisation of the Christian Church, and although there is a great deal of money given, and given very readily, yet I must confess that in many places there is not a missionary prayer-meeting as there used to be. (Hear, hear.) I do not mind telling you another secret. There was a brother missionary of mine, a little while ago, who was at home for a little while, and he happened to have the opportunity of hearing the minister of the place offering, he said, eighteen prayers, and he did not mention missions or missionaries once in the whole eighteen; and I say to you, moreover, if you do not have a missionary spirit in the pulpit you won't get it in the pew—there is no doubt about that. And at the same place, at a missionary prayer-meeting, twenty-five people were present; there were three long hymns with very long metre tunes, and three long prayers about a quarter of an hour each, and then the Benediction, and there was not a word said about missions. There ought to have been a special benediction prepared for that meeting. (Laughter.) My brethren, we want you to feel that we out yonder feel that we need Divine guidance and Divine protection in our work—(hear, hear)—and we want these missionary prayer-meetings revived; and we must believe in prayer, in the spiritual force upon which our success depends, if we are to carry on this work. Of course our prayers must be reasonable. I do not think that a great many of the prayers that are offered could possibly be answered. I remember a brother missionary of mine a little while ago, praying for fair wind for instance. It would have been a very nice thing for us to have got it, but it would certainly have been a foul wind for somebody else close by. (Laughter.) And when you have people praying for wind from all parts of the compass, and people at war praying that each side may win, why even the Almighty Himself cannot answer prayers like that. (Laughter.) We must be believing, and we must be reasonable, and be sincere in these prayers of ours. That is all I want to say about these two heads, because I want to tell you something about the effects of the Gospel out yonder amongst the heathen. About 22 years next December, I was, as has been described by a rather graphic outspoken writer, taken by the slack of the trousers and pitched on to an island to learn the language and improve the people. (Laughter.) It is a very interesting thing, I can tell you—(laughter)—to acquire these languages and reduce them to writing. There is a degree of satisfaction, however, when we have reduced the language to writing, and have given them the Gospel and have seen the people growing up in civilisation around us—I say there is some satisfaction in looking back upon fifteen or twenty years spent like that. (Hear, hear.) We read sometimes in the *Christian World* of some of you people in this country after you have had twenty years of faithful labour there is a recognition of that labour, and to show how successful you have been you are presented with an electro teapot. (Laughter.) It is a very satisfactory thing, I dare say, to receive these presents—the fact is, our people have not got teapots and inkstands; and if they had they would be afraid to give them to us, because they would be afraid you might think we were movable. (Laughter.) However, as I say, it is a very interesting thing, reducing these languages to writing, and doing the sort of work I have described. I remember a gentleman saying to me a little while ago, "Of course when you go out to these people you have got to make their language." He said "They have an active voice, I suppose." "Yes," I said, "a very active one, indeed." He said, "Do you give them a passive voice?" "Well," I said, "it would be the first thing we should give them if we could when we land amongst these noisy savages," but the fact is we have not got to give them anything at all. Many of you are quite mistaken on this subject; they have a language and a grammar, and that is a great deal better than ours in some respects. You have not got your inclusive and exclusive pronouns here. They have one pronoun for including the people spoken to, and another for excluding them, and they have the dual number, and they have no less than seven words for the pronoun "you." They have a Court language and a common language—these cannibals, I mean. I consider one of the strongest arguments that can be used to show that the natives are going down and not coming up may be derived from the language of the people. Their language shows that they must have been in a higher position than they are now. The chiefs talk to the people in the common language, and use another when they speak among themselves. And, suppose I give you the first sentence of the Lord's Prayer. In the common language, it would be "Keme hunc e caha hnengödrai," while in the chiefs' language it would be "Tre-tritroti i anga nijihunie Ka pucatine e cahati." Well, I said, that is everything to show that the people are going down. Why, you may look at their idols or temples or their literature—even India and China, of which we hear so much, where is there an idol to be compared to the statue of Minerva, or a temple to be compared with the Parthenon; or where are there any sentiments originated now for sublimity and purity excelling those of Socrates of old? say the heathen are getting worse year by year, and if Christianity does not come to them as a conservative element, and save them, they will be swept away by the great tidal wave of what we are pleased to call civilisation and human progress. But I think the Gospel has shown that these natives are quite capable of being elevated. Some learned men have said that they did not think the natives of Africa and Madagascar and the South Seas were capable of being elevated at all. Facts go against them. We know what the Gospel has done; indeed, I know no better way of conveying an idea to you of the marvellous change that comes over a people when they have received Christianity than by taking you in imagination to an island where they are cannibals and heathens, and then taking you to another where they have received the Gospel, say twenty or thirty years. I remember when I visited Erromanga on my way to my station. We had anchored in the bay, and my wife and myself went to spend a night or two with Mr. and Mrs. Gordon, who were then living on a hill. They had gone up there and built a small, weather-board house, in order to get away from fever and ague. We stood on the balcony of that little house one night, and remember gazing upon a never-to-be-forgotten scene. It was one of those lovely nights you seldom see in this country. The moon had come forth like a fair shepherdess, with her flock of stars, and there the mountain peaks were rising one over another, in their silent and solemn grandeur. Down in the valley there was a cannibal village, and as we stood there together, two missionaries and their wives, the representatives of God, the messengers of peace and truth and love in a land like that, there came up from the valley below screams from a woman that I shall never forget. They came up the hill, they rose and echoed amongst the hills, and sent a thrill of horror to our souls. We felt, "Here is God in nature, but there is the devil in man," and at the bottom of those lovely hills, mingling even with the murmuring of the stream, there were the songs of these people at the cannibal feast, and the beating of the drums, and all that abomination going on that we are familiar with in New Guinea. People talk to me about letting the heathens alone. Why, my friends, you do not know what you are talking about. (Applause.) Try and picture to yourselves such a scene as was witnessed that night. It was enough to make a man feel that there was a darkness around him that might be felt. And then we visited another island, and as soon as ever the ship was sighted there went a thrill of joy through the island, and messengers flew from village to village, and the people were assembling in their holiday clothes, and when our boat touched the beach they picked it up, and all in it, and carried us half way up to the mission house. (Laughter.) There they were, smiling faces, nicely clothed, clean villages, well-built churches, and large ones, too, crowded congregations, glorious singing—and they know how to sing out yonder—what a change! I remember going into one of those churches. It was like going into a laundry; there were clothes lines all along the place, and garments fearfully and wonderfully made, some of them. (Laughter.) I said "What does all this mean?" "Oh," it was said, "we have just had our May meetings; these are the contributions of the people." (Laughter.) They have not any money; they give what they have got—yes, and they give the best they have got; they give the best of the young men to the institution, and they are trained to go down as pioneer teachers, and they give the best of their time to religious instruction, and the best of their property to send the Gospel to the heathen. It is a wonderful transformation that takes place in the course of 20 or 30 years; you can scarcely realise it. Why, look out upon the South Sea Islands. Our chairman referred to the fact that they are almost self-supporting. There are several missions out there that are quite self-supporting. 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(Continued on Page 1084.)

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CONTENTS OF NO. XLIII.

LEADING ARTICLES:	PAGE
The Position of Congregationalism	1067
Notes on the Union Meetings	1067
The Tithe Rent-Charge Grievance	1068
The Basuto War	1069
Corrupt Constituencies	1081
The Scepticism of the Age	1051

CORESPONDENCE:	PAGE
Bishop Ryle on Nonconformity	1069
Dr. Simon on the Senatus Academicus	1069
Deserted Farms	1070

CONGREGATIONAL UNION AUTUMNAL SESSION:	PAGE
Thursday's Session	1071
Conference on Scepticism	1074
Continental and Foreign Missions	1077
Service for the Young	1084
Meeting on Home Missions	1085
for Young Men	1088
Congregational Total Abstinence Association	1089

MISCELLANEOUS:	PAGE
Working of the Burials Act	1082
Religious Equality Movement	1090
News of the Free Churches	1092

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THURSDAY, OCTOBER 21, 1880.

THE BASUTO WAR.

SIR BARTLE FRERE has been recalled, and in bodily presence is now in England, enjoying the congratulations of sympathetic Imperialists and the approbation of the QUEEN. But his spirit still rules at the Cape, and has plunged the colony in what we are sure is a disgraceful, and we fear will be a disastrous, war. Would that it were as easy to recall his spirit as his person, his policy as himself. The news from Basutoland is sad and shameful in the extreme. We are being dragged into a war with a loyal and obedient tribe, who have been up to this time proud of the position of our subjects; and now, in spite of ourselves, we shall either have to fight and conquer them swiftly, or all South Africa will be in a blaze. We are not sure that it is not in a blaze already. We look forward with the greatest anxiety to the detailed news which the next mail may bring. The success of Colonel CARRINGTON at Mafeteng relieves us of our most pressing anxieties; but things are in such a critical condition that we may hear at any moment of a great calamity which may compel us to hasten to the help of our self-willed colonists, and rescue them from the consequences of their cruel folly, of which two Colonial Secretaries have solemnly warned them; or else we must see the homes of civilisation, which with sore toil and pain we have planted in the wilderness, trampled by triumphant savages in the dust. And it is all one man's work. Sir BARTLE FRERE is the author of this Basuto War, and all the bloodshed and misery which inevitably must follow in its steps. We do not say that he is not in sympathy with the leaders of the colony; unhappily he is. The true problem which the colonists have to solve is how to live with the Basutos, and other native tribes around them, as free and independent communities. The Basutos have been making progress, and developing many of the fruits of civilisation under our rule, and were but lately the most loyal of our dependents. The problem which Sir BARTLE FRERE and the colonists have set themselves to solve is how to humble and break the native tribes, and make them incapable of developing anything at all. The Basutos are too independent and self-respectful to give up what they have won and relapse into the condition of docile and timid serfs of the Colony; and hence what we fear will prove a bloody and destructive war.

We are doing in South Africa precisely what we have been trying to do in Afghanistan; but happily the enterprise was stopped in time, though not before we had suffered much harm and loss. We set ourselves in our imperial might, and for our imperial safety, to reduce Afghanistan to the condition of a dependency; we are doing the same thing at the Cape. Zulus and Basutos were to be made incapable of menacing our security; and then, and then only, our imperial jealousy would be appeased and our imperial tranquillity assured. Like some of old, of whom dread things are written in the prophetic Word, we must "Dwell alone in the midst of the land." Free neighbours we cannot tolerate; all around us must own our supremacy, or be struck by our superior power to the dust. And the formidable part of the matter is that this is a deliberate scheme of policy which very able men among us advocate, and are continually urging us to pursue. Sir BARTLE FRERE, to do him justice, is the reverse of a blood-thirsty and mischief-making man by nature, and yet he has made more mischief than any other satrap of his time. He is a man of Christian principle and habit, and yet, through this craze about our imperial position and duties, he has dragged us, against our will, against our convictions, against the clearest previsions of the end of the way in which he was leading us, into a series of the most un-Christian enterprises that we

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have been guilty of for generations; and he has inflicted a stain on the Christian name which it will take long years to wash away. Happily, the enterprises have been terribly costly in blood and treasure, and have been the reverse of brilliant successes. As if the judgment of heaven were against us, this cruel and selfish policy in Afghanistan and in South Africa has inflicted upon us in two continents the most humbling reverses which have befallen our arms in this generation—reverses which our best commanders and our bravest troops have with difficulty repaired. Perhaps these humiliating passages in our military history will, in the long run, like many another calamity, have benign ministries to our moral culture and progress as a people, and may save us, by setting us on more Christian courses, still graver catastrophes in the future.

The last news from Basutoland, as we have said, relieves us of our most pressing anxiety, and that is all. We cannot suppose that a brave and strong tribe like the Basutos, whose blood is thoroughly up, will be so discomfited by this serious check as to abandon their hostile attitude, especially as their neighbours are making common cause with them. The country of the Jambookies, who have joined the insurgents, is a very wild and rugged district, and is said to be peculiarly suited for a guerilla war, which would soon tire out the little bands whom the colony can bring into the field. The success of Colonel CARRINGTON may have the happy effect of limiting the area of the war by preventing the tribes who lie farther afield from joining; but we have not much hope of its having any direct or strong result on the natives already in the field. It is some comfort that the telegraph has brought us so quickly this news of Colonel CARRINGTON's success, or the gravest apprehensions would have been entertained as to his safety until the arrival of the next mail. We still await news of Colonel BAYLEY at Maseru, who is happily well supplied with provisions, but who, when the last accounts left, was closely beset, and any calamity to his force would more than counterbalance the advantage which Colonel CARRINGTON has gained at Mafeting. How true were Sir GARNET WOLSELEY's previsions, when he wrote to Sir M. HICKS BEACH, "Should the Basutos take up arms on this question of disarmament, they will probably be joined by other natives from all quarters, there being a community of interests between all on this subject." The Basutos who have worked in the colony, as a matter of course, are brought back again with them; and at the diamond fields and at the railway works, guns were actually forced on them by the authorities. And yet the mere possession of arms is regarded by the Colonial Government and their champion, Sir BARTLE FRERE, as the sign of a hostile disposition, and the menace of a formidable rebellion before long. We had better formulate in one sentence the idea which is behind all these apprehensions, and the tyrannous cruelties in which such apprehensions never fail to fruit. Rifles are the weapons of Christians, and any savage who owns a rifle threatens the Christians, and must be disarmed or shot down. The policy of the disarmament of the Basutos has been distinctly condemned by the highest authorities both in Africa and England, and it would be bare justice to leave the colonials to face the storm which they have raised, and to reap the fruits of the dragons' teeth that they have sown. But, unhappily, they know that generous England would never forsake her self-willed children in their extremity, and they discount our certain aid. There is something which may be brought to bear, perhaps, in the suggestion of the *Spectator*, that if we have to send Imperial troops to help them, or rather to save them, they should be made to pay every farthing of the cost.

CORRUPT CONSTITUENCIES.

THE revelations gradually extorted by the Election Commissions are odious and disgusting; but there is nothing in them that need shake our faith in the ultimate triumph of purity. On the contrary, the circumstances and the customs favourable to corruption are becoming so manifest under the inquiries at present conducted, that we may almost congratulate ourselves upon the opportunity of discoveries which must suggest salutary preventive measures to be embodied in the expected supplementary Reform Bill. Those, if any, who expected that the ballot would abolish bribery, must needs be disappointed; but they may at least have the comfort of noting that corruption has been driven to more indirect methods, a more uncertain operation, and a more intolerable expenditure. If there are any enthusiasts who believed bribery to be confined to one party, they must be painfully undeceived. But it may be some consolation to observe that this political baseness is most rife precisely where municipal activity and real conflict

of opinion are most stagnant. Pharisaic Britons who have given thanks that we are not as other nations, or even as those unblushing Yankees, may well feel humiliated. But they may find a more modest national pride in the evidence afforded that the growth of our political life has at least engendered public opinion which will not tolerate these abuses, but will insist on such reforms as shall, at any rate, diminish the facilities for resorting to them.

It is not for us to anticipate the reports of the Commissioners, still less to impute personal dishonour from fragmentary incidents in an unfinished inquiry. But the fact of deliberate and organised corruption in several boroughs is already so clear that it would be affectation to ignore it; and the forms it has assumed are suggestive enough for politicians, without waiting for judicial conclusions as to corporate or individual responsibility. The case of Oxford has naturally attracted the most attention, not that it has been worse than other constituencies, but because it derives a reflected lustre from the University, and because honourable names have been, more than elsewhere, mixed up in the inquiry. Careless men will sympathise with the misfortune of the Chichele Professor, whose dropped letter has been far more widely read than any other writings he is likely to produce. To it we are indebted for a striking illustration of the influence expected from the clergy at election times. Two clergymen are reckoned as "worth a hundred additional votes." If this is anything like the ordinary rate of parson power, hysterical fears of a revolutionary democracy may well find comfort in the institution which assigns at least one cultured gentleman to every parish to look after its manners. What the democracy may have to say to such an institution is another question. On the face of it, it does seem rather hard to have to pay an army of canvassers to oppose our dearest wishes. We all know the advantages of a drag on the wheel; but the House of Lords was supposed to serve that purpose, and surely the pace of democracy is not so swift, nor the path of progress so smooth and easy, as to require some 20,000 drags to be provided at the public expense. Liberal clergymen, of course, are to be met with. But, on the whole, we incline to think that the Chichele Professor's friends are typical. And "political Dissenters," whom iteration of abuse has made almost ashamed of themselves, would do well to reckon up the parson power in their neighbourhoods before they consent to effacement. Another suggestion gleaned from the wandering epistle of the Chichele Professor is the remarkable faith in the power of filthy lucre exhibited sometimes by the dignitaries of unworldly professions. A clergyman or a University Professor would seem to have incitements or temptations to unduly ideal views of life. We should expect to find in them amiable enthusiasts ready to do battle against mundane wrongs with no other arms than those of logic and love. But such is not apparently the danger of Oxford. The Chichele Professor readily believed the assurance he received that "the fight must collapse unless they could provide £500 over the Carlton £3,000." It is pleasing, however, to note that, notwithstanding this vague, and perhaps childlike, belief in the power of money, unworldly simplicity still sanctifies the professorial chair. For the Professor assured the Commissioners "he had no idea" that the "money was to be used otherwise than for legal purposes; it did not strike him that there was anything improper going on at the last election, and he had no idea that money was used in the way it had been according to the evidence." No; £3,500, in addition to other sums at the back of this, seemed a very natural expenditure for a borough of the size of Oxford.

Professor BURROWS' simplicity was of course entirely unaffected. But surely it is high time that such a condition of mind should become impossible. It ought now to be recognised, once for all, that nothing like £5,000 or £6,000 can possibly be required for a purely conducted contest in a borough like Oxford; and the very fact that such sums are being raised, or are declared necessary, should excite the suspicion of all honourable members of the party. The carnival of extravagance revealed in most of these inquiries is absolutely inconsistent with purity. Messengers with no messages to take, canvassers without districts, committee rooms where no one meets, are often, to common sense, as clear signs of corruption as the passage of coin into the voter's hand. We cannot help thinking there are cases in which it ought not to be so easy for agents and candidates notoriously aware of such things to get off scot-free as they do. To wait for universal moral elevation is a tedious process, and there is a good deal to be said for the proposal to forbid all paid canvassing, or at any rate to disfranchise for the purpose of any particular election every voter who, in any manner whatever, is paid for his services, however legal and necessary those services

may be. Some such measure, together with the closing of public-houses on the day of election—at any rate, during the hours of polling—would make bribery and treating more difficult. But our best hope lies in the direction of such an arrangement of constituencies as should make these practices obviously futile. The cases now under examination are uniformly those of boroughs in which either the municipal life is decayed and stagnant, or else political organisation and free debate are paralysed by the cold shadow of some effete anachronism. The Sandwich boroughs are a specimen of the first kind, Oxford of the second, and Canterbury, perhaps, of both. For the first evil there is no effectual remedy short of disfranchisement. And there ought to be the less hesitation about this, inasmuch as the forthcoming Reform Bill will commute the penalty into that of absorption in larger constituencies. The cases of Oxford and Chester are more difficult. The area of the constituency in Chester, however, might be enlarged. Nothing but disestablishment of the Church will save Oxford from the dangers to which it is exposed by the reckless and desperate party passion of ecclesiastics.

THE SCEPTICISM OF THE AGE.

THE complaint which has been sometimes heard, that the sittings of the Congregational Union are taken up with unprofitable discussions, will hardly be made of the meetings just brought to a conclusion at Birmingham. From the sermon of Mr. EUSTACE CONDER to the papers on Scepticism read on Friday, the time of the ministers and delegates was occupied with matters not only of high, but of immediate and practical, interest. It is surely a "sign of the times" that within the last twelve months, after two episcopal charges had been devoted almost entirely to the spread of unbelief, the Church Congress, and after it the Congregational Union, should have found in this same fact the fitting subject of their profoundest and most solicitous deliberations. Mr. CONDER virtually, though not formally, brought the whole subject forward when he so luminously placed in the foreground of his sermon the distinction between those two orders of Divine truth equally contained within the Gospel, one set of which lay within the power of man to discover, and the other set which man never could have discovered unless they had been distinctively and authoritatively communicated. It may truly be said that, without reference express or implied to this distinction, some of the most remarkable phenomena of the present day can be but imperfectly understood. By purifying the original intuitions of humanity, by restoring essential points of view which had been lost, by bringing scattered truths around their true centres, as well as by purging the spiritual vision and opening the gates of light, Christianity has restored to mankind as a fruitful possession a body of truth, of which it had failed to make any use or even to apprehend the meaning until the coming of Him who is the Truth. Now, when we hear of one public teacher after another who has renounced the doctrines of the incarnation and the resurrection and the supernatural generally, while still calling CHRIST his master, the meaning is that he accepts Christianity as so much light upon subjects properly and in their own nature within human ken, albeit not actually perceived before CHRIST, while rejecting those truths which lay altogether outside the range of human thought, undiscoverable by any human intuition, and which could become known to us only by a positive and Divine impartation—known, that is, by means of an authoritative declaration. The apostles, however, made no distinction between the authoritativeness of these two sets of truth, which for them were inseparable, but proclaimed both with earnest and unhesitating confidence. The difference thus discriminated is too fundamental to have escaped the notice of any reflecting mind, but Mr. CONDER has done well to place it in the strong light cast upon it in his sermon. It touches cardinal questions of that theological "method" which is becoming so important to religious teachers, and to hearers also, if they but knew it, at the present day, and on which depends the question whether we have in Christianity a real religion, or only one more philosophy? Mr. CONDER holding that in the Gospel we have a revelation of new and blessed relations between God and man which have been not only revealed, but brought about by the only-begotten Son of God, consistently holds that this Gospel cannot be modified to suit the changing tastes of any age, but must be preached in its simplicity to every creature that is under heaven.

But now, supposing that he is right, here is a fact of the utmost importance. In England, this favoured land, and in this nineteenth century, doubt and distrust as to the authority of the Christian

revelation prevail to an extent which is causing Christian patriots to feel the utmost anxiety for the belief of the next generation. The paper read by Dr. KENNEDY at the Birmingham meeting turned on the question, "Has Christianity anything to fear?" The answer is plain. The fear of Christianity is like the mourning of RACHEL "for her children," and she cannot be comforted if they "are not." Mr. RADFORD THOMSON, who offered his hearers a kind of survey of the religious belief of England, tells us that our farmers and their labourers, the merchants of our great cities, and the shopkeepers of country towns, "seem little affected by the waves of unbelief;" but seeing that these are also the classes least accessible to intellectual influences, there is not much comfort in the assurance, especially when we are further informed that the classes most affected by the same influence are "University and professional men and their families, and the artisans in our large industrial centres of population." Facts like those brought forward in Mr. RADFORD THOMSON's paper cannot be too carefully noted, for the Church will do nothing while it dwells in epicurean ease, and at present it is very far indeed from realising the danger in which unbelief is placing the souls which it is its office to win for CHRIST. The questions which pressed most upon the minds of the speakers at Birmingham were, How may this wide extent of doubt be best estimated? How has it been caused? What should be the temper and attitude of the Christian Church towards those most affected by it? And by what means are its destructive influences to be counteracted? As to the prevalence of the evil, it will be necessary to discriminate its degrees, and to distinguish between scepticism and infidelity, and again between scepticism and mere weakness or unsettlement of faith. Many men are simply puzzled, brought to a stand, by having forced upon them questions which they are not prepared by training and habits of thought to deal with. Others, who may have gone further at times, have only passing moods of doubt, and believe at heart, though too prone to dwell upon the uncertain to the neglect of the certain. It would be a misfortune if the Church passed from culpable indifference to an exaggerated apprehension of the evil. For practical purposes, however, it is important to remember that even that low degree of unbelief which consists in regarding all questions as "open" is sufficient to neutralise the force of all appeal on the ground of the authority of religion. As to the causes of the present unbelief, it is satisfactory to find the speakers at Birmingham all declining to trace them to a desire to find an apology for gross vice and sin. It does not follow, however, that the most powerful of those causes are not essentially and profoundly moral. It will not, we believe, be disputed that the faith of this age in revelation has been weakened by nothing so much as by the currency of views which, however various in their detail and origin—appearing now as absolute reign of law, now as a theory of evolution, now as speculative Pantheism—agree in representing what Theists have been accustomed to call the creation, as something quite different—as an original, self-contained, and self-sufficing whole, not, therefore, dependent upon a personal and ever-present God. Nor can it be necessary, in addressing those who regard the relation of man to God as that on which his character depends and in which all his other relations have their ground, and who hold that the denial of this primary and fundamental relation is of the very essence of sin, to show how predisposed the mind of every age must be to welcome a theory which offers to release man from all sense of created dependence. To ignore this strong connection between the quasi-scientific theories of the day and the secret, though perhaps unconscious, wish of so many hearts would, we venture to think, be to place ourselves outside the conditions under which the phenomena before us are to be explained. We live in an age when the human mind, having achieved great results in the domain of science, is elated to a higher degree of self-confidence. Just as at the Revival of Letters the merely human consciousness of the age was excited and exalted, and became almost Pagan in its pride of independence, so now science is ministering to the same false freedom of self-exultation, and religion cannot but suffer for a time.

The practical aspects of the question were dealt with at Birmingham more directly by Mr. WHITE in his paper on "The Method and Spirit in which the Sceptical Tendency should be approached," than by any other speaker. Mr. WHITE is exceedingly anxious that Christians should not falsify the cause committed to them by any unjust or unkind treatment of those who are in mental or spiritual difficulty. There is something behind the doubt which we detect, something deeper than the question which rises to the lips, and

it is to that we have to find our way. Many Christians get frightened, fretful, and fidgety in presence of doubt, because their own belief has so little depth and reality. This, we take it, is in part, at least, what Mr. WHITE has in view, when he declares that "the scepticism which it is worth our while to consider, pervades the church-going community almost as much as the non-church-going." Men who ought to be Christians hesitate and doubt, because instead of having had CHRIST set before them as He is, full of compassion for sinners and mourners, they have had to listen to the artificial requirements of modern Christianity. The net result of Mr. WHITE's argument, if we have correctly apprehended his meaning, is that we must learn to seize upon what is essential and eternal in the Gospel, whatever may become of the forms and accidental circumstances which we have been accustomed to associate with it. But the essential in the Gospel—it is CHRIST, none other, nothing else. Men want Him as much now in their sin and sorrow as they did before they heard of the potency and promise which inhere in atoms. Ministers, and even deacons, must be careful to understand, not only the age, but the temper of their Master, and be patient and sympathetic. The rationalism of orthodoxy must be persuaded to restrain itself. The theological discontent which refuses to "know in part" or "see through a glass darkly" must submit itself to repentance and conversion, and in statements of doctrine the chief concern of religious teachers must be to preserve and present intact those essential elements of the truth which are correlative to the wants of the soul. On all hands we see bruised reeds which CHRIST assuredly would not break, and smoking flax which He would not quench. Men who believe clearly can be patient, calm, charitable, hopeful, as no others can. When the spirit of fear, with all its inconsistencies and insincerities, has been cast out, then those who are now wavering will be quick to discern the augmented strength of the Church, and will rally to its consecrated banner.

"PERFIDY" is an ugly word, but it is being freely used in reference to the Porte's engagement to surrender Dulcigno. Perhaps, however, the unconscionable delay in the preliminary arrangements is only due to the incurable Turkish habit of waiting for something to turn up. Clearly the European Concert in respect to other provisions of the Treaty of Berlin is broken up, but the Porte is, we should think, grievously mistaken if it believes that its recent solemn engagement can be evaded. Montenegro is required, before Dulcigno is surrendered, to sign a convention agreeing to maintain the *status quo* to the east of Lake Scutari, to guarantee the rights of the Mahomedan population, and to maintain the Turkish flag. The first and third of these conditions have been rejected, and we are told that negotiations are proceeding "with favourable results." The international squadron, however, remains at Cattaro. Any way, the patience of the Montenegrins is likely to be sorely tried before they obtain peaceable possession of the little port assigned to them by the Treaty of Berlin.

Still greater patience will need to be exercised by the Greeks before they obtain the large portions of Thessaly and Epirus, the cession of which was "recommended" by the recent Berlin Conference; for the French Government, who were foremost in pressing this claim, have distinctly notified that they are not prepared to coerce the Turks. The King and Queen have been received with much enthusiasm on their return to Athens after their visit to the European Courts. Though his subjects are in a very warlike mood, King GEORGE will not advise them to take action this year, but we shall hear more of his views on the opening of the Chambers.

All the Great Powers, though several of them are anxious to be quiescent as to action, seem to be haunted by the spectre of the Eastern Question, and evidently do not expect the "Sick Man" at Constantinople to last long. The recent escapade of the Prince RODOLPH is not yet forgotten. Lord HOUGHTON, to whom the Austrian CROWN PRINCE confided that, under certain conceivable circumstances, Austria would desire to extend her dominion as far as Salonica, has been obliged to minimise the effect of the statement by saying that the reference was to an ultimate solution of the Eastern Question, and that the Prince is not a practised diplomatist. It is, however, clear that Mr. GLADSTONE's celebrated expression, "Hands off," was not mistimed as applied to the ambition of the Vienna Government. Lord HOUGHTON has taken occasion to reiterate his own personal opinion—"and in contradiction to the views of my political chief, that England should look to Austrian preponderance in the Balkan Peninsula, and, in the calamitous event of the collapse of the Turkish Empire, on the

Bosphorus itself, as the best security for Europe and civilisation." Heaven forbid such a calamity! Schemes for the partition of Turkey among the central European Powers are certainly discussed in influential diplomatic *coteries*, but are not likely to be boldly avowed so long as Mr. GLADSTONE remains Prime Minister of England.

The CZAR has at present other cares besides the Eastern Question, though the interests of Montenegro, his *protégé*, are never lost sight of. Contrary to the wishes of the Imperial family, his Majesty was recently privately married to the Princess DOLGOROUKI. Should the CZAREWITCH, who has gone to Livadia, consent to the proposal for recognising that lady's children as Princes of the Blood, it is said that the EMPEROR will appoint him co-regent, transfer to him the reins of government, and himself reside permanently in his palace in the Crimea. This arrangement would probably be followed by a change in Russian policy, not so much in foreign affairs as in domestic government. Liberal constitutional concessions are expected from the CZAREWITCH whenever he becomes, virtually or nominally, the head of the State.

The reports prevalent last week of the early prosecution of the leaders of the Irish Land League for conspiracy, have not been authoritatively confirmed. Indeed, the reply of Mr. FORSTER to the invitation to a banquet at Armagh does not indicate that recourse will readily be had to any such policy, for the Chief Secretary remarks that, before exceptional legislation is applied to Ireland, the resources of those constitutional powers which suffice for the good government of Great Britain should be tried even to exhaustion. Evidently the right hon. gentleman is not in so great a panic as some of his landlord advisers. Still the situation is bad enough, and apparently the terrorism which has prevailed in certain districts knows no abatement. To Mayo and Galway the Government have now added Kerry as a county which it is formally declared to be in a state of disturbance and without an adequate police force. In addition to the customary acts of violence, another assassination is recorded. At Kurkau, a man named DOWNEY, who was driving Mr. HUTCHINS, a landlord and agent, has been shot dead, in place of his master, by a man who disappeared. The Government have offered £1,000 reward, but there is as little probability that the murderer will be detected in this case as in that of Lord MOUNTMORE. The land meetings continue, though on a small scale, and Mr. PARNELL has again put in a public appearance. His speech at the Longford meeting was particularly cautious, though he reiterated his desire to destroy landlordism in Ireland as the chief prop of English rule, after which they would go in for legislative independence. Mr. PARNELL thinks he may be prosecuted next month, by which time he hopes Ireland will be so organised as to do without him.

THE BURIALS ACT.

The Carlisle Diocesan Conference, at their meeting on the 7th inst., adopted with a modification a resolution proposed by the Bishop of the diocese: "Whilst regretting the change made in the law of burial, this conference desires to express an earnest hope that the provisions of the new law may be so considerably used and applied by all parties concerned as to preserve the peace and goodwill which have hitherto subsisted in the parishes of this diocese." The Rev. C. M. Preston spoke of the Bill as being contrary to the terms of Magna Charta and a violation of the Eighth Commandment; and Dr. Hayman vented his hostility to the Bishop for the support given to the Bill in references to States of imperfect civilisation in Europe where "the embarrassed traveller found that the police who ought to protect him were undistinguishable from the brigands, and to their dismay they found the escort fraternising with the brigands who were demanding their money or their lives." The Bishop expressed the opinion that if there was to be a change in the law, the Act was conceived in as friendly a tone to the Church and its ministers as it possibly could be; and their true interest would be now to make the best of it, and endeavour to make it work as smoothly, gently, and with as little irritation as possible. Rev. W. Jones said he had opposed the Bill while it was a Bill; but now that it was an Act they must either resign their livings or carry it out in the fullest manner possible. He did not hear that many were going to resign, and he did not think it was necessary.

At the Ripon Diocesan Conference, the Chancellor of the diocese read a paper on the "Present Position of the Church, with reference to the Law of Burial." He said: "In a diocese where so many separate and district parishes for ecclesiastical purposes have been constituted, it may be worth noting that by 19 and 20 Vict., c. 104 (Lord Blandford's Act), s. 15, the incumbent of every new parish has sole and exclusive cure of souls and the exclusive right of performing all ecclesiastical offices for the resident inhabitants therein who shall for all ecclesiastical purposes be parishioners thereof, and of no other parish. I think the right of interment in consecrated ground is within the term ecclesiastical purpose." No non-parishioner dying out of the parish has a right to be buried in the churchyard, except in the very rare case of his being able to establish a prescriptive right to a vault or to show a faculty, and it is most unlikely that any faculty in existence should be in such general terms. No so-called purchase is of any avail without a faculty, but the incumbent and churchwardens may permit the burial of non-parishioners. Under this Act I can see no illegality in extending the permission to Nonconformists, with all the liberty as to form of service given by the Act; and I think the spirit of the Act should

be carried out by making no difference between Churchmen and Nonconformists in granting such permission." Rev. H. D. Cust Nunn asked whether there was anything in the Act to prevent their entering burials under this new Act at the end of their. The Chancellor said he could see no objection to keeping the register in the way suggested; but the President expressed the opinion that it would be an unwise course to take. Upon other points the Bishop of Ripon thus expressed his opinions:—"A question was asked in the House of Commons respecting the use of bells, and Mr. Osborne Morgan very properly stated that the Act does not touch the Church or anything connected with it, and that, therefore, there is no power to toll the bell, as is the custom to have it tolled in the case of burials with the rites of the Church of England. I draw, however, this distinction. In the case of death the bell is generally tolled on two different occasions. It is tolled to signify the departure of a soul, and it is tolled as a part of the service of the Church. Now, I think we should be unwise to refuse the tolling of the bell simply as announcing the departure of a soul. I think it would be right to allow it then, but I would not allow the bell to be tolled in the case of a service conducted by a Nonconformist minister. The Act does not warrant it, and the more closely we keep within the lines of the Act the better it will be. Another question is, Would a clergyman be wise in separating one particular portion of his churchyard for burials under this Act? I say, Certainly not. I can imagine nothing more likely to irritate the feelings of Nonconformists than an arrangement like that. Take the case of a Nonconformist whose partner or child has been buried with the rites of the Church of England some time past. Another member of the family dies. Of course the surviving members will wish that this new interment should take place by the side of the other, and to say that this should not be, would be an exercise of power on the part of the clergy likely to lead to most disastrous contentions, which we could not too strongly deprecate. It has been said by some clergymen that they will decline to receive the fees. But the Act warrants them in receiving them, and I must remind you that in the case of an incumbent they are not his freehold property. He holds them in trust, and to surrender them is to surrender what you have no right to surrender—to part with a portion of Church property which it is your bounden duty to guard." The Rev. H. Bullivant (vicar of Lower Whitley) asked if the fees were not due to the clergyman for breaking his freehold? If that were so, the clergy would still be justified in receiving the fees where the burial was by a Nonconformist minister. Dr. Swabey, said the rev. gentleman, was undoubtedly right, but he did not think that, properly speaking, any fees were due for personal service. The President, in concluding, expressed the opinion that as the Burials Bill had now become law, it was their duty as Christian men to carry it out in a spirit of loyalty to the Parliament which had enacted the law, and conciliation towards those whose professed grievance it was the avowed object of the Act to relieve.

The *Echo* says:—"Three more Bishops have addressed their clergy on the subject of the new Burials Act, and each of them has counselled loyal and ungrudging obedience to the law. It is to be regretted that there should be any need for such advice; but, as in some cases, clergymen have descended to the spiteful littleness of refusing to allow the use of the bier or the coffin ropes for any burial not conducted by themselves, the Bishop of Oxford has good reasons for the counsels given to his clergy against the exhibition of so un-Christian a temper. If the rural clergy will only take his advice, there is not likely to be much difficulty in regard to the non-parishioner question. Nothing could be more ungracious than the refusal to allow the burial of a non-parishioner, not because he was a non-parishioner, but because he was a Nonconformist, and, as the Bishop of Oxford urges, where the concession is made as a favour no condition of the use of the Church Service should be made. The Bishop of Truro reminds the clergy that 'retaliation, grudge, ill-grace, stinted loyalty, are not in the armour which Christ has laid up for His Church.' What would He call the ill-natured refusal of a clergyman to register the burial of a Nonconformist? The law calls it a misdemeanour, and two or three cases have already occurred in which the clergy have broken the law in this respect. Who is to put the law into force? It is hardly likely that the Government will allow a few obstinate rural rectors to defy the new law with impunity; at any rate, if they do, the men who now violate one provision in the Act will soon devise means of violating other provisions, and will, we fear, find not a few imitators."

The Bishop of Oxford, speaking at the luncheon held in connection with the reopening of the Hungerford Parish Church, referred to the Burials Act. He said he felt sure the clergy would look upon it as the outcome of a series of struggles. There would have been no Burials Act required but from the fact that Dissenters existed, and he exhorted the clergy therefore so to use their personal influence among their friends and acquaintances that they might gain the goodwill and fellowship of those who thought differently from them who were at present outside the Church. He asked them to act with forbearance in asserting their authority.

The annual tripartite conference for the diocese of Bath and Wells was opened on Tuesday at the cathedral city, Lord Arthur Hervey presiding. The right rev. prelate in his address urged a loyal obedience to the new Burials Act, and a conciliatory bearing toward Nonconformists. He said it would be ungracious to withhold the tolling of the bell at a Dissenter's funeral. There were several other things arising out of the Act, such as the consecration of churchyards and the closing of burial grounds, but on these he would not now touch, as he had reason to believe that there would be shortly a meeting of Bishops to concert some common action in all dioceses. The report of the Parliamentary Measures Committee said the whole course of the Burials Act marked the measure as a concession to popular agitation rather than as founded on the principles of reason or justice. A hope was, however, expressed that Churchmen would submit courteously and with good grace to its enactments, while they steadily refused anything which the Act did not require.

Although there is a new cemetery at Skipton, and most of the graveyards belonging to places of worship are full in the former place, an interment took place in the consecrated portion of the Church of England on Thursday last, which, but for the recent passing of the Burials Act, would have been somewhat difficult. The funeral in question was of a person named John Thompson, an old man who died suddenly on Monday week just after witnessing the funeral procession of one of his old friends. It appeared that Mr. Thompson was a Dissenter, but had lately purchased the site for a grave in the

Church of England portion of the cemetery. The first part of the funeral service was conducted by the Rev. J. Osborn in the Dissenters' chapel, after which the same gentleman finished the service at the graveside. The proceedings were very orderly.

The Rev. W. J. Morris, minister of Sardis Independent Chapel, Pontypridd, officiated at the Rhondda Church of England Burial-ground on the occasion of the interment of a son of Mr. David Jones, Hopkinstown. Interest attached to the proceedings owing to this being the first burial in local Church ground since the passing of the new Act of Parliament. The Rev. Bickerton Edwards, vicar, facilitated matters with the greatest readiness. On the same day the Rev. Mr. Jones, Baptist minister, Rhydycelyn, officiated at Glyntaff Cemetery.

The Rev. T. Kendall, Free Methodist minister of Market Rasen, Lincolnshire, received from the Rev. T. W. Mossmann, the vicar of West Torrington, an invitation to take part with him in a funeral service of a young person whose parents are Free Methodists, on Sunday afternoon last. To this courteous invitation Mr. Kendall promptly and heartily responded. He read the first lesson in the church. The vicar officiated at the grave, and then invited the mourners and people to re-enter the church to hear an address from Mr. Kendall. There was a general compliance with the request; the sacred edifice was filled, a hymn was sung, and an address was given by the Methodist minister. At the close the vicar pronounced the

Rev. Mr. Hoare, Baptist minister, Rhydycelyn, officiated at Glyntaff Cemetery.

"A Moderate Churchman" concludes in the *Record* a series of elaborate articles on the "Burials Bill and its Lessons." He maintains that the opening of the churchyards is not a revolution, but simply an enlarging of the Church. Almost the only alteration made is in the position of the Nonconformists, who, he maintains, have abandoned their former standpoint. They have virtually given up so far as the churchyard is concerned their whole disestablishment Gospel, accepting in its stead the once-abused principle of concurrent endowment. They have widened the basis of the Establishment and metamorphosed themselves into joint proprietors with Churchmen of property held in trust from the State for the performance of Christian and orderly services. Disestablishment is thus rendered more remote. A movement intended to destroy the Church has been overruled to protect it, and the assailants of the Establishment have now gone inside to protect it.

Mr. Thomas Watkins, of Alderley-villa, St. George's, having last week lost his youngest child, Mabel Matilda Watkins, aged four or five months, intimated his intention of having her buried in the family grave in the churchyard of St. George's, Gloucestershire, whereupon he received the following letter from the vicar:—"St. George's Vicarage, Oct. 7, 1880. Dear Sir.—I am very sorry to hear of the death of your baby. You wish to bury it, I am told, in the parish churchyard on Saturday next. Of course you are aware that I could not have read the Burial Service of the Church of England over an unbaptized child previous to the passing of the Burials Act, 1880. That Act empowers a clergyman to use an alternative service in such cases, such service to consist of a passage from the Holy Scriptures and prayers from the Book of Common Prayer. The service will be a passage from the Old Testament—2nd Samuel, 12th, 15th, and 23rd verses, and at the grave the Lord's Prayer and the collects for 1st Advent, Innocent's-day, 6th Epiphany, 2nd Lent, with one other prayer, and 'The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.' Knowing that you hold views antagonistic to infant baptism, I am assuming that your child is unbaptized. If, however, I am mistaken, you will, perhaps, kindly inform me, when of course I should read the ordinary service.—I am, yours faithfully, A. R. D. FLAMSTEAD. Mr. Thomas Watkins." Mr. Watkins, feeling an repugnance to the "alternative service," replied that under the circumstances he should avail himself of the new Burial Laws Amendment Act. The vicar accepted the notice, and the Rev. W. Lance, minister of the Congregational chapel at Russell Town, having been communicated with, readily consented to perform the service. The burial took place on Monday afternoon. Mr. Watkins's residence is only a few hundred yards from the church, and the mourners, headed by the minister, the Rev. W. Lance, walked to the churchyard, the coffin being carried by members of the family. The service used was that prepared by the Rev. E. R. Conder. There was a noticeable absence of the tolling of the bell, usual at church interments; and though it was tolled at the death of the child, it was stated that application for it to be tolled at the funeral was refused.

The Bishop of Peterborough has issued a circular to his clergy, strongly urging them to accept the Burials Act with the best possible grace. His Lordship says that he feels deeply with those who hold that in redressing a little wrong a great one has been done, still he considers it the duty of the clergy "gently to take that which urgently came."

"In view of the impossibility under existing circumstances of consenting to the consecration of any additions to our churchyards and cemeteries," the Hon. C. S. Wood suggests that efforts should be directed to "providing places of interment, to be held on private trusts, and, as such, to be consecrated for the use of the Church, and to the obtaining from the proper ecclesiastical authorities some form for the blessing of each grave when interments have to take place in unconsecrated ground." In order to give an opportunity for discussing this subject, it is proposed to hold a meeting in London, in November, in St. James's-hall.

Mr. H. Fowler, M.P., speaking at a meeting at Wolverhampton, in connection with the annual meeting of the Congregational Union, touched upon the Burials Bill, and congratulated Nonconformists upon its easy working and the good results which had already been obtained from it.

Mr. Lewis Fry, M.P., speaking at a religious gathering at Bristol, said he was glad to see the way in which the Burials Act was received by those who opposed it. It was not difficult to understand the reluctance felt towards it by the clergy and the members of the Established Church, but there were signs that they were willing to accept it in a broad and Christian spirit. He rejoiced to acknowledge the utterances of some distinguished prelates of the Church, which had been breathed in a broad and very Christian spirit.

The Bishop of Salisbury has addressed a letter to the rural deans of his diocese on the subject of the Burials Bill. He recommends that the clergy shall not permit the tolling of the church bell before or after the funerals of Nonconformists, but says that the registration of such interments is ordered by the law of the land, and, not being sinful, should be complied with. He enjoins upon the clergy the importance of enforcing the fees in all cases, and sanctions the use of the shorter service. The Bishop concludes by expressing his willingness to consecrate an additional patch of land added to churchyards when called upon to do so.

At Teddington, the first Nonconformist funeral under the new Act was fixed for Saturday afternoon, the remains to be interred being those of a child who had died somewhat suddenly on the 8th instant, and whose father is a jobbing gardener, named Alfred Hoare. The man being desirous that the child should be buried in the family grave, in the parish churchyard (which is as yet unenclosed), without the rites of the Church of England, under the provisions of the recent Act, gave the required notice. An hour or two before the time fixed for the funeral, when all arrangements were completed, he received from one of the churchwardens the following letter:—"Teddington, Oct. 16, 1880.—Sir,—In accordance with your request I beg to inform you that there is no objection to your child being buried in the consecrated portion of the cemetery; but, as the churchyard is full, I am sorry that it cannot take place there.—Yours faithfully, FRED. GEO. THYNNE. Mr. Hoare." Mr. Hoare, however, being advised that as the churchyard has not been closed by order of the Secretary of State, and that it is intended to keep it open, and still to use it, determined to challenge the right of the vicar and churchwardens to refuse a parishioner access to and use of it, and duly appeared at the entrance gate with the coffin containing the body of the deceased child, and accompanied by relatives and friends, together with Bishop Sugden, of the Reformed Church of England, who had undertaken to perform the service. No church official was present, and the persons in charge of the funeral learned from their own observation that there was no grave, a fact which was corroborated by the usual gravedigger. The funeral party then took back the corpse to the house of Mr. Hoare, who had resolved to take the necessary steps in vindication of his right as a parishioner to have the body interred in the parish churchyard. Bishop Sugden writes: "The real point is this, whether any ecclesiastical officer can still, in spite of the new Burials Act, deny a parishioner's right to interment in the churchyard, and choose for him a grave in a cemetery instead."

AUTUMN.

"Cut it down; why cumbereth it the ground?"—LUKE xiii. 7.

AUTUMN tints come in their season,
Spring for summer maketh room,
Fruits and grain securely garnered,
Tell that winter cometh soon.

Smiling spring, with vernal showers,
Sunshine bright and blossoms fair,
Promiseth that harvest hours
Shall in autumn crown the year.

Manhood hath its spring, its summer,
Autumn sere and winter-time;
Happy they who wisely garner
Health and strength in manhood's prime.

Oft among luxuriant foliage
Stands a withered, blighted tree,
Leafless, branchless, trunk all bark'd,
Cumberer of the ground to be!

He who owns the fair plantation,
Giveth words that seal its doom—
"Cut it down, why should it cumber
Space where vigorous life might bloom?"

So, amid earth's human garden,
Oft a blighted one is found;
Leaflets in its spring-tide promis'd
Fruit in autumn would abound.

Like the dew of early morning,
Leaves and blossoms passed away;
Barren left, the scene deforming,
Cumberer of the ground to stay!

Mighty Dresser of Thy vineyard,
Prune and tend the barren tree!
Neath Thy wise, Thy blessed culture,
It may yet bear fruit to Thee.

—HARRIETTE A. NOEL-THATCHER.

STRANGE PROCEEDINGS IN A CORNISH CHURCH.—A correspondent of the *Daily News* writes:—"The village of Lannath Gwennap, in Cornwall, has seen the scene of some extraordinary proceedings within the last few days. The late vicar, Mr. Hopgood, who was a hard-working Ritualist, exchanged parishes a year ago with the present vicar, who has so utterly failed to attract the people, that occasionally there has been no service on Sunday at all. Last Sunday Mr. Hopgood returned, and announced his intention of holding service. The result was the two vicars attempted to hold service simultaneously, the congregation showing their feeling in the matter by refusing to join in a hymn given out by Mr. Hopgood's successor. Mr. Hopgood remained in the chancel from morning to night, the parishioners supplying him with food, and encouraging him to fight it out. In spite of the excitement, the services were conducted with considerable decorum. It is expected that the bishop will interfere in the matter."

THE MARRIAGE LAW.—In opening the Lincoln Diocesan Conference, the Bishop dwelt chiefly on the law of marriage and divorce. He argued strongly against the Bill for legalizing marriage with a deceased wife's sister, but declared his conviction that before long England, unless her clergy and laity awoke to their duty in reference to the question, would take her place in degradation by the side of America and other countries where the proportion of divorce cases was so high. The Deceased Wife's Sister Bill was the key, he said, to the whole position, and if that was lost they surrendered the whole fort, and their marriage law would fall into the hands of the enemy.

THE CONGREGATIONAL UNION.

(Continued from Page 1079.)

arms. It is a great mistake. We have a great difficulty in getting at them, and when we get at them, we have great difficulty in getting them to give up heathenish customs and embrace Christianity. They like the night dance; and a man prefers having half-a-dozen wives to having one, because it means half-a-dozen plantations. It means, if the man is reduced to one wife, that he has to do all the work, and he cannot see that. I remember, when we were trying to introduce the Gospel to one of these heathen islands, the people were giving us reasons why they did not want a missionary. I remember a tall heathen came up with a club over his shoulder—a man who had been on board some of our vessels, and had picked up a little English, and a little dislike to the missionaries, too. He said, "Black fellows no want a missionary." "Oh," we said, "you had better have a missionary," and tried to show him the advantage. "Oh," he said, "suppose missionary come here by-and-by, he make all black people work. Black fellow no like work; he too much lazy, too much gentleman." (Laughter.) He seemed to think those synonymous terms. (Laughter.) We had with us one of the men from the vessel—rather a little man, and unfortunately he had on him a very large suit of clothes, which literally hung on him, and, amongst other things, this man said, "Suppose missionary come here by-and-by, he tell all black fellows make clothes; black fellow say, 'No, we make paint, white men make clothes.' Suppose black fellow make clothes, he no look well; you look at this fellow here." (Laughter.) Here was our little friend in this large suit of clothes, and we felt really it would have been very much better for the man if he had been dressed in the simple way in which these natives were. (Laughter.) But still I want you to understand that we have a great many difficulties in getting at the people. Yet we have got at them. We have had difficulties arising from the unsurveyed state of the coast of Guinea and the number of languages, from the hostility of the natives, and from the absence of large and powerful chiefs, men who have influence; but I am happy to tell you, notwithstanding, that we have been able, by God's blessing, to open up 600 miles of the coast line, to form the acquaintance of the people along the coast, and to found thirty mission stations, to reduce four of the languages to writing, and to translate schoolbooks, catechisms, and portions of the Scriptures into those languages. That is something, and we feel we ought to thank God, and take courage, and go on with our work in that great island. (Applause.) It is sometimes objected that the South Sea Islands are small, of comparatively little commercial value, and that they are inhabited by a people really the remnant of a worn-out race. That cannot be said of New Guinea. Here you have a splendid country, everything to fire one's enthusiasm, and there are all these people sunk in heathenism and idolatry. We know what the result will be. We have taken the Gospel to the people in the South Sea Islands; we know how they have been lifted up; we know what the effect has been; and we are sure that if we carry the Gospel to New Guinea, and are faithful to do our part, the same result will follow. We have been taught two lessons, however—we must have retreats and sanatoriums for our missionaries and teachers; and next, if the island is to be evangelised at all, it must be by the natives themselves. Therefore, we want for New Guinea a training institution worthy of New Guinea, and worthy of the London Missionary Society, and I am happy to tell you that I was made the bearer of a message from a distinguished friend of our Mission, to say to the directors that he was prepared to supply a vessel for our work, and also establish an institution, and give £100 a year to keep the institution going. (Applause.) Let us thank God that many of those who have long purses have also got large and liberal and sympathetic hearts. It is certainly more blessed to give than to receive. It would be a very blessed thing, I dare say, for some men to receive. I was staying a little while ago with a singularly pious man, who has the magnificent salary of £30 a year. He has nine children and seven deacons. (Laughter.) I daresay it would be a blessed thing for him to receive. I can only say that that gentleman brought a family Missionary box, in which he and his family had been trying to realise the joy of giving. I must say I just felt that night that I wished I had been lecturing for the Church Aid Society. (Hear, hear.) However, we must all feel this, that if we are to be faithful in the different posts in which God has placed us, we must be Missionary to some extent. There are plenty of men in this country like my friend to whom I have referred just now. I heard only last week of a deacon from the south who was looking out for a minister, and he happened to go into a church where Dr. Allon was preaching, and he asked who that gentleman was. (Laughter.) He said, "I suppose he is one of your five hundred pounds. (Laughter.) If he were to preach like that for us he would not get £50 a year." (Laughter.) So you

see there are differences of opinion. (Laughter.) My friend has not come to that, for he had got £30 a year, and therefore he must be a better preacher than Dr. Allon, I suppose. (Laughter.) There is plenty of work for the Church Aid Society, and for the London Missionary Society. The fact is, we must try and get out of ourselves—(hear, hear)—that will make your churches prosper. This is emphatically a missionary age. Governments have got their missions, and science has got its missions, and merchants have got their missions, but these people are apt to forget that they are all the children of the good mission of the church. In this great age of money-getting we must not forget the spiritual influences upon which our success depends. (Hear, hear.) We must be men of faith and prayer. We must believe, and we must make other people believe that we believe in the power of God's Holy Spirit. That is the influence we want, not only to move over the dark places of the earth, but to move over the dark places of the church, too—(hear, hear)—and when we get that we shall find that our churches will be fired with enthusiasm and zeal in this great missionary cause.

" Looking back the way we've come,
What a light, O Lord, we see,
All the failure in ourselves,
All the love and strength in Thee.
Yet it seemed so dark before,
Would that we had trusted more.

" We will shun no future storm,
Sure Thy voice is in its wind:
We'll confront each coming cloud,
Sure the sun is bright behind.
Praying then, or praising now,
Only wilt Thou teach us how?

" Use us for Thy glory, Lord,
In the way that seemeth right;
Whether to wait and watch,
Or to gird our limbs and fight.
Marching on, or standing still,
Each is best when 'tis Thy will.

" When at last the end shall come,
What, O Lord, is death but this?
Door of our dear Father's home,
Entrance into perfect bliss;
Peril past, and labour done.
Sorrow over, peace begun."

(Loud applause.)
The benediction was then pronounced, and the proceedings closed.

SERVICE FOR THE YOUNG.

On Wednesday evening a service for the young was held in the Town Hall, under the presidency of Sir Charles Reed, M.P. The attendance was not so large as had been anticipated, and, indeed, chiefly comprised "children of larger growth." The proceedings commenced with singing and prayer.

SIR CHARLES REED ON DISSENTING PRINCIPLES.

The CHAIRMAN: I came to meet young Birmingham, not the Sunday-school children only, though I expected to meet some of them, for I rarely go anywhere without meeting, and I always do it with joy, the representatives of our Sunday-schools; but I wanted to see what I shall never be satisfied without seeing—the children of Congregational families. (Hear, hear.) My impression is that they are a little overlooked; that meetings would be very valuable to which they could be invited, and where they could hear something about the great principles which, at any rate, in their homes ought to be held most precious. We have no such meeting. Birmingham takes the lead in everything, and I thought it was going to take the lead in this. We will try it in London, and give Birmingham an example, unless Birmingham next year tries it herself. I wanted to talk a little to our children and young people about their principles. They study history in the Board schools and at home, and I dare say they know something about that terrible page of history in the reign of Mary, and that unsatisfactory one in the reign of the glorious Elizabeth, as she is called; and I dare say they may have heard something of the doings of Charles I. They may know that what James threatened Charles carried out, and what that king said who uttered these words, "I will have no arguing in this country; if they do not conform I will hurry them out of the land." They know that, and they know what was the result of it—that men and women were driven from their native land, that the *Mayflower* went out carrying the Pilgrim Fathers, that they landed upon Plymouth Rock, upon which some on this platform, like myself, have taken their stand. They know that those pilgrims carried, by the good providence of God, an English Bible for the whole world which had been agreed upon by the translators and dedicated to the king; and then they know that when Charles came, he did not revive the fires in Smithfield, but he did wicked and cruel things to those who were not able to conform in this country; that men were branded upon the cheek, and had their ears cut off, and had to stand in the pillory; and that the dungeons of the land were full of the Dissenters who in England were unable to conform; and by this probably they know

what the true meaning of Nonconformity is, when the king said, "You shall conform, or you shall suffer for it;" then the Nonconformists of this country said, "We will not conform, and we will abide the vengeance of the king." You know what happened as the consequence of the frenzy to which the people were goaded, and I suppose that the children of our families have been fairly instructed in the glorious history of the Commonwealth. They know and love the name of Oliver Cromwell—(applause)—and the names of John Milton and John Hampden. (Applause.) But I want them to know something more as to the lessons which are to be derived from those historical statements which are very rarely and unfairly given in many of the histories which find their way into our libraries and schools. I hope they know, also, how it was we lost that Commonwealth, how it was we were deceived by promises from Charles; how he broke the promises and strove to put upon us a new Act of Uniformity, and how the people resented that in the year 1662, to their eternal honour and glory. There is in London a Memorial Hall raised in memory of the men who were ejected from their livings in 1662 because they would not give their unfeigned assent and consent to an altered Prayer-book, and because they would not do as the State desired when the announcement was made, that unless they conformed they must go out; they did go out. The father left his church, he left his parsonage, and the mother and children with him turned their backs upon the home where they had been born. They knew not where they were going, and they left all for the sake of conscience. These men, surely, are worthy of honour, and our children ought to have impressed upon them constantly the lesson that is to be derived from the conduct of those faithful men and those heroic women. You know where we came to in the time of William, and that we had certain privileges and toleration granted to us in this State. But it is not toleration we want, it is not privilege we ask. What we demand is what we are prepared to give to every other man—freedom—(applause)—perfect religious freedom, which cannot be achieved without full and thorough religious equality. The history of my boyhood, of course, is fresh in my memory, and I remember certain questions I put in reference to my family and the answers I had. I heard that though ancestors of mine attended a church because there was no other place of worship, and because there was a godly minister, yet the living was sold by auction and a minister came who did not preach the Gospel, and, consequently, though not Dissenters, that family had to dissent. It is because we like to dissent, not because we feel it a pleasant thing to be Separatists, but because we must dissent, that Dissenters are found in this country. I remember very well asking why it was, and the answer was because they were Dissenters. I remember that a farm was held, and that farm had to be given up. What was the cause of that? Because he was a Dissenter. I remember a man who had a chance in our family line of a public office, but he could not take it. Why? Because he was a Dissenter. I know that my own father was denied the privilege of going to Cambridge that he might take his training before he entered the ministry. Do you think it does not make any impression upon me, the fact that he was refused, having the highest opportunity of cultivating his talent and preparing himself for the greatest work, that in this country a man can undertake in an institution called a national institution, and yet the doors closed against men because they were Dissenters? Of course all these things decided me in my conviction as to what course I should take. (Applause.) Now I want your children not to be educated out of catechisms and out of histories, but to be told by the father and the mother, in the family and early in life, why it is that we are Nonconformists, and when it is that we shall cease to be so. We are living in a wonderful time. Great changes take place, some very suddenly. I know not what changes may be within a short time; but this I know, that all our children ought to be intelligently trained. You cannot train them in the Board school, you cannot train them in the ordinary voluntary school, and you cannot train them in this sense in the Sunday-school. Where are they to be trained? At home by you, and in meetings such as this; and therefore I felt gratified when I saw that a meeting was arranged for the young people of our families, that we might talk together upon these very great questions. A Congress was held in Leicester the other day, and many pleasant words were spoken, and I, for one, felt glad at any opportunity of approaching those with whom we differ in opinion, if in central truth we are agreed. But I heard it said by a bishop, "Well, after this, why don't the Dissenters put aside their little differences and come home again to the Church of Eng'land?" There is a great deal to be said before that can be done. (Laughter.) I know the door is open, but the conditions are such that we cannot go through the door. It would be very pleasant, no doubt, to have all thoroughly united, when there is common work to do; but there are great questions yet to be settled first. I have lived to see the abolition of the Test and Corporations Act; I have lived to see the claims of Dissenters admitted,

and Church-rates abolished, and the Universities opened, and the rite of marriage to be celebrated in our chapels given; and I voted two months ago for the abolition of those burial laws which were a disgrace to our country. (Applause.) Why have we Dissenters in England? There are none in the United States. Christian men of all denominations meet together on every occasion, and on every platform where there is a good object. (Hear, hear.) Why can they do it? We know why. There are no Dissenters in the colonies, to which such multitudes of our brethren have gone out. There are no Dissenters in Ireland. (Applause.) I believe that Scotland would be better without them. (Laughter.) I am sure Wales does not want to have Dissenters. (Hear, hear.) The whole population are called Dissenters, but they would like to be acknowledged as the Church of Christ. And England has only to make up its mind, and the thing will be done as quietly and as peacefully and as successfully as it has been done in Ireland, and the bishops and clergy will acknowledge that the Church in England, free from the control of the State, will be both purer and holier and more powerful than ever she has been in the centuries that are past. (Applause.) I do not say that this thing is likely to come soon—(applause)—and I want the men and the women of the next generation, who will have to deal undoubtedly with this question, to be thoroughly instructed and prepared upon the subject, which will be left for their settlement. All over the country I want Congregational, Baptist, Methodist families to undertake the instruction of their children in these matters, and not to be afraid of them. Let it be perfectly understood that we have principles that have come down to us from the Puritan times; that we value them; that we will stand to them; that we will diffuse information upon them; and that so soon as the country shall be instructed in them we believe that it will follow the principle it has already followed to a certain extent. We have no quarrel with any; we love the members of the Church of England, and the clergy of the Church of England, where they are pious and disinterested; we love also all other sections of Christian communities; but what we say is this—that there is one thing for which we are waiting, and without which Nonconformists in this country can never alter their position, and Dissenters must always be found in the land as long as we have a Church connected with the State, and a denial of full religious equality to the people. (Applause.)

PRACTICAL HINTS TO THE YOUNG.

Rev. T. HIRST HOLLOWELL, of Bedford Chapel, London, then delivered an address to young people. After pointing out that though some were as young as fourteen years, they could yet be Christians, and that they might love and serve Christ though there were many things in Christianity they were not yet competent to understand, he said they could not only believe in Christ, but they could do a great deal of work for Him. There was a boy in London who thought he would do something for Christ. He had been persuaded to go to a ragged school, but when he got there he found he was bigger than most of the boys, and began to feel some responsibility. The result was that every Saturday night he went and invested twopence in buying an enormous square card covered with texts of Scripture, which he cut up and distributed in the ragged school on the Sunday. No one told him about it: he found it out himself through the rude instincts of his love for Christ. (Applause.) He appealed to young men and women, above all things, if they wished to serve Christ, to avoid what he would call dandyism—(hear, hear)—the love of finery, the love of silly frippery in dress or language or anything else. Let them live simple lives, wear plain clothes—(hear, hear)—and have simple hearts. (Hear, hear.) If they were boatmen and had to row him over the ferry, they would not spend all their time in painting the outside of the boat; they would stand to their oars and take him safely across. And they had got a soul to carry across this ferry of temptation, and to land on the heavenly shore, but if they spent all their time in painting the outside of their boat, they would have no time left to take care of the spiritual interests embarked upon that little craft. (Applause.) If they were humble and loving and true, they were sure to be beautiful in some way or another, and in the best way, with that beauty without which all was deformity. Let them grow into the shape which God had planned for them, like the lilies cover themselves with graces of meekness and charity, and then Solomon in all his glory was never arrayed as they would be. Let them be proud of honest work. (Hear, hear.) Twenty years ago he knew a young boy in a Sunday-school who listened to the Scripture lessons every Sunday, sang the hymns, and heard his teacher pray. The other day he thought he would like to go and see him; but he had to see him in a convict's cell. How was this change? He wanted to be a big man. God made him a workman, but he tried to make himself a master. God did not want many great men. When He wanted a few He made them, and made them very quickly. He wanted a great

many ordinary men, but not many great men. He did not want Great Britain to be all like Wales, or Cumberland, or Westmoreland. It was a grand thing to have a mountain country, but it was not mountains that had made England; it was the magnificent flats of Lincolnshire, Warwickshire, and Bedfordshire. So with social elevation. God did not want everybody to be a master. This young man wanted to be. He got into difficulties, and at last wrote a false name, and was tried and convicted. The cells around him were all filled with men who had been in good positions, but who would not be content with honest simplicity, who would not be content with doing their duty, but wanted to gild duty with a sham lustre which had ruined them. Then they must not think that God had left them all alone to struggle with these dangers and temptations. The Saviour was praying for them, and there was a voice which said from heaven as it once said on earth, "Suffer the little children to come unto Me." God was with them in all that they did, and if they won the victory amidst difficulties and temptations his joy would be greater than their own. Let them remember that, for by so doing they would be enabled to win many victories. He hoped the young people of Birmingham would have a very powerful action upon this most important population. If Birmingham went down in the next thirty years, England would go down with it; if Birmingham kept its place, following the peaceful and Christian counsels of the great statesman for whom their fathers had voted again and again—(applause)—then there would be a power issuing from that centre to the extremities of the land, there would be an influence exerted upon the tone of public opinion of which centuries would reap the benefit. He besought them, therefore, to be Christian, that they might sink like a sacred salt into the mass of this population and be a very savour of Christ to all around. (Applause.)

RESPECT TO PARENTS.

Dr. A. M'ASLANE then addressed the children on the subject of respect to parents. First, he said, parents ought to be respected by their children in thinking about them; children must not think of their parents as their inferiors, because, perhaps, they were deficient in education. They should remember that they owed all their advantages to their parents who had provided them with better education, very often at the cost of self-denial to themselves. If they did not respect their parents the time would come when they would reap as they had sown, and that very bitterly, too. Young people should also respect their parents in speaking about them. He deprecated strongly the terms frequently used by boys and girls in speaking of their parents, and expressed his strong love for the good old words "father" and "mother." (Applause.) There was something so rich, and grand, and attractive about the word "father," that God Himself said that was one of His names; and just as the twining ivy made the old tree, or the old cottage, look all the more beautiful, even so there were associations entwined about the word "mother," which ought to make it dear to all their hearts. They should also respect their parents in speaking to them. If he ran a needle into the arm of one of the girls before him, it would cause her great pain, but unkind words to parents, especially to mothers, affected them a great deal more than the needle would the arm. (Hear, hear.) He had seen mothers in London weep bitterly, not because they had sons who were opposed to virtue—no; some of them were teachers in Sunday-schools, and members of churches—but because they spoke unkindly to them. Then young people should respect their parents in all their actions concerning them. Some of the young people present might one day have more money than their fathers and mothers. If that was the case they must not forget them. He read the other day of an old man in one of their unions having a son in a very good situation in the great city who yet allowed his father to be a pauper. If he were a magistrate, and could exercise the power, he would give that young man two years' imprisonment with hard labour. (Applause.) The young man professed to be a Christian, and that was the worst of it, for a Christian profession when associated with such conduct was a thing to be detested. (Applause.) Let them remember Solomon, who one day when sitting on his throne saw his mother coming. He did not wait till she came; no, he went down and met her, and gave her the place of honour, seating her at his own right hand. Speaking to parents themselves, he said he had found in some homes a wonderful amount of restrictions. In the Garden of Eden there was only one prohibited tree: perhaps there were 100 that were not prohibited. Parents should not impose unnecessary or irritating restrictions upon children, but should give them as much scope as possible. He made it a practice to gather his family round him one night a week, and they sang hymns, but they sang songs, too; and the song with which they generally wound up was, "Home, sweet home." Depend upon it they could not sing that with him if all the trees in his garden were prohibited. They knew there was one prohibited tree, and that was the tree of sin. They would not be allowed to touch that if

he could help it, but everything else they were at perfect freedom to enjoy. The great difficulty was to govern children rightly, and they might be sure that people who could not govern themselves could not govern their children. There was an unfeeling government in some homes, entirely opposed to anything that was gentle, and good, and kind. Why was God their Father, and why did He call Himself so, but to teach them how they ought to govern their children. As a father he knew something of the relation existing between a father and a son, but when he came to think of the relation existing between the Divine Father and His only Son, there was a truth he could not reach. The sacrifice of Christ was a thing past his comprehension, and he could only quote with all his heart the words of the hymn—

"Oh, 'twas love, 'twas wondrous love,
The love of God for me,
That brought my Saviour from above,
To die on Calvary."

The love of the Son was wonderful, the love of the Father was just as wonderful. And then when they went astray from Him in any sense and returned, He did not bar the door against them; no, He ran to meet them, threw His arms about them, and gave them a thorough welcome. Let them treat their families in the same way, putting their foot down upon what was wrong; but whenever they saw the wrong-doer returning to the right path, let them give him their hand and welcome him to their hearts; nay, let them weep with him, and pray with him, and for him, in this way showing that they were trying to govern their children, and then they would earn their children's respect and love.

A vote of thanks to the chairman was proposed by Mr. H. WRIGHT, and seconded by Mr. R. W. DALE, and the proceedings closed.

MEETING ON HOME MISSION WORK.

On Thursday evening there was a large gathering in the Town Hall to hear two addresses by the Rev. Colmer B. Symes and the Rev. J. G. Rogers, on the subject of Home Work. The hall was well filled. The chair was taken by Mr. Albert Spicer. A hymn having been sung, prayer was offered by the Rev. J. A. Macfadyen, M.A.

The CHAIRMAN said: Ladies and gentlemen,—In meeting here to-night, we do so as one of a series of meetings in connection with the autumnal gatherings of the Congregational Union of England and Wales—a body of churches numbering over 2,000, and having in them rather more than 1,200 other preaching stations; a body of churches from the pulpits of which Sunday after Sunday goes forth the glorious news of the old, old message that God so loved the world as to give His only-begotten Son that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but should have everlasting life. From the pulpits, too, of these churches men and women are trained in all the principles and teaching of God's Holy Word, and I take it that we as Congregationalists have no reason to think lightly of our brethren who, up and down the country, are ever foremost in all philanthropic and educational organisations, and who in a very large measure are helping to create a healthy public opinion in this our country. Then in our churches and from our pulpits our people are taught that not only for themselves is this Gospel preached, but that, on having received it themselves, they are bound, as Christians, to send it forth, not only to their fellow-countrymen, who are less favourably situated than they are, but to send it to the uttermost parts of the earth. And in meeting here this evening we are anxious that those friends who have come to speak to us should help you to increase the zeal and activity which you are throwing into your Christian life. Coming to this midland metropolis—a metropolis we all so much admire for its zeal and activity in all that concerns philanthropy, education, and political organisations generally—we are anxious that your labours should not end here, but that a further impetus should be given to all Christian work. I believe that the effects of the speeches that we shall hear from our friends, Mr. Symes and Mr. Rogers, will do something in arousing a newer enthusiasm and a newer zeal. It may seem strange that nearly at the close of the nineteenth century, in this Christian England of ours, it should be necessary to say anything with regard to the home work of this country. Other evenings this week have been devoted to the Continental and foreign missionary work; last night we had a meeting for the young; to-night we are asked to look more particularly at home missionary work. Some of you may say, "But is it necessary that we should think much about this work now, after we have been for more than a hundred years sending some of our best men and many thousands of pounds to foreign countries, to take the Gospel to other lands—is it necessary that still we should be talking so much about home missionary work here?" If you will follow me in just a few figures, I think you will see that England does present a case at the present time which demands the earnest attention of every Christian man and woman

in this country. Consider just one or two figures in connection with the metropolis. It is estimated at the present time we have a population in what we call Greater London, reckoned from a radius of twelve miles from Charing-cross, of just over four and a half millions. Now to provide for the religious accommodation of that population, it is not necessary that we should provide for every person; but it is estimated that if we provide for fifty-eight out of every hundred, we shall have done all that is necessary to do; and that would require sitting accommodation in church and chapel for 2,600,000 persons. If we take the actual position of affairs we find that the accommodation only amounts to about 1,400,000 sittings; about 700,000 provided by the Church of England, the remainder being provided by the rest of the Free Churches, leaving a deficiency of 1,200,000. Let me also point to one part of the metropolis the increase of the population of which I believe has not its equal in the whole of England—I refer to the parish of West Ham in the east part of London—a parish that in 1851, only 30 years ago, had a population of 18,000, and to day it is estimated that it has a population of 140,000. The religious deficiency ten years ago in that locality was 21 per cent.; owing to the rapid growth of the population and the failure of Christians to do their duty it has run up to 40 per cent. These few figures alone, I think, present a case of religious destitution which is simply appalling. Then if we inquire, Is the accommodation already provided amply supplied with hearers and with occupiers? I fear we cannot give as satisfactory an answer as we could desire. God be thanked there are many of these churches which are not large enough for those who would go and listen to our preachers, but in other places there are many churches and chapels that we would desire to see much more fully occupied than they are. In regard to the attendance generally, especially in regard to East London, the picture is very dark. Some of us may have read the speech of the Bishop of Bedford, who was compelled to present to the Church Congress only a fortnight ago a very dark picture of the state of religion in that locality, and to admit that, speaking broadly, the great majority of the working classes of that district were not in attendance at any place of worship. From inquiries made by our own agents in the south-east of London, we found that in one district, out of 2,000 people, there were 120 attending public worship, and only 40 who were regular communicants; and amongst the working and poorer classes in that locality it was found that only about one in ten could be called in any way religious; and there were sometimes found twenty or thirty houses where there were only one or two attending any place of worship. I think therefore, I have, at any rate, made a case that there is need for us to look very seriously at this question; but we may reply by asking, Upon whom does the obligation rest to make up this deficiency? And I say, unhesitatingly, it rests upon the Church to whom Christ gave the commission, that they were to go into all nations, commencing at Jerusalem. And I think there is a voice at the present time speaking to us to go forth to do our share of this work. As Congregational churches and a Congregational Union, we have during the last few years recognised, far more, perhaps, than we have done in the past, this obligation that is resting upon us. Our meeting to-night shows that, at any rate, we consider something of that obligation. The fresh organisations that we have been arranging within the last two or three years—especially that new organisation, the Church-Aid Society—the confederation of our County Unions, so as to do this work with a great united power—the strong helping the weak—are organisations that, I believe, are destined to occupy a very important position in this work. During the last week other means have been proposed, and at a conference in connection with lay-preaching, some extremely useful suggestions were made; and it was seen by what was said at that meeting, that there were many earnest men thoroughly at work in this department of labour, with intelligence to extend it. I think it is one of those departments that we, as Congregationalists, are bound to look to, and we are bound to see that we take a more active share in it in the future than we have done in the past. We respect our ministers, but we have no doctrines by which we can afford to leave to them alone the preaching of the Gospel. We know and we teach that all who have received that Gospel in their own hearts are competent to speak of it to those with whom they meet. But whilst we try to strengthen our organisations, whilst we strive to strengthen our united action, let us never forget that those organisations and those unions will only have strength in proportion to the spiritual power displayed by the individual members of our churches; and if nothing else is done to-night, I hope it will go home to all the church members here, that they should be up and doing, and see to it that, as far as God has given them strength and ability, they shall devote them to His service; so that when our work is done here, and we are called to lay down our arms, we may leave England better for our lives. (Applause.)

SPIRITUAL CLAIMS OF THE POPULATION.

The Rev. COLMER B. SYMES, B.A., of Exeter, then said:—I may be allowed one word at the outset just to express the hearty pleasure which we feel in coming together from all parts of England to gain the influences which Birmingham life can bring to bear upon us. Birmingham air is a tonic to our gentler Devon natures. I felt it when I stepped out of the train on Monday. And certainly Birmingham intellectual and political air is a tonic. It is very pleasant to come within reach of these bracing and invigorating influences. I hope, too, that the Birmingham religious atmosphere is a tonic, and will send us back holier, stronger, and more earnest men than when we came together. The purpose of the meeting this evening is to lay upon our hearts and upon our consciences the spiritual condition of England—upon our hearts that our sympathies may be called out, and upon our consciences that our sense of obligation and duty may be awakened. The facts which have been reported to us this morning (part of which you have heard this evening) have been sad, indeed. We have listened to statistics; we have listened to stories regarding the religious influence which is being exerted in different parts of the country; we have listened to the miserable, sorry trash which has been taught in the name of religious truth; and we have listened until, while our feelings of mirth have been awakened on the one side, our feelings of grief have been stirred on the other. We have laughed simply because, as men, we could scarcely do the opposite; but we have felt most deeply this morning the spiritual neglect, ignorance, and indifference in which large masses of our people are living. I feel that whatever may be said about the power of scepticism and theoretical unbelief, however definitely our creed may be challenged, the magnitude of our task, as a Christian Church, lies in the profound indifference and religious torpor in which multitudes of our countrymen are living. We would be thankful if they would take sufficient interest in religious truth to rise and challenge our creed. Too often the creed passes unchallenged, but the claims of Christ are treated with perfect indifference. The truth is, Christianity is more than a creed. It bears the claims of Christ upon its forefront, and it excites the hostility and rebellion of the human heart. If we would be content simply to teach theoretical truths, men, perhaps, might accept them; but when, as the Christian Church, we press the claims of the living Christ, we find those claims are refused with scorn. What are we to do with this great practical difficulty? It is laid upon our hearts as a portion of the Christian Church. First, we have to see that we are not to allow that difficulty to excite our dismay. We see the full proportions of the difficulty; we see that men refuse to come within the sound of truth; that even those who listen refuse to submit their lives to its sway; we see that there are marshalled against us social and intellectual influences; we see that our own intellectual power and social influence are not strong enough to cope with these difficulties; but we see, on the other hand, ministries of heaven encouraging and helping us forward. We see the great Captain of our salvation, who measured the whole cost of the grand crusade which He led on before He left His throne in glory. We fix our gaze fearlessly on Him, and we can say, "God hath not given us the spirit of fear, but the power." After all, Christian friends, the post of difficulty and the post of danger is the post of honour. Go to those soldiers quartered in the barracks, and listen to them as they tell you that they are ordered out to the scene of war. Is there fear, is there sorrow? Is not every soldier's heart thrilling with hope and ambition, feeling that service and danger mean the possibilities of honour and dignity? If we are called to a very difficult position, if we see that the spiritual dangers that surround our work are very grave and manifold, let our hearts leap up within us at the honour which Christ has put upon us in calling us to the post of danger and difficulty. It is not ours to shrink from service. Sir, it is un-English to quail where duty calls, and it is essentially un-Christian. (Applause.) I am not going to attempt in any way to lessen the force of the appeal which will be made to-night, but rather to appreciate it at its full worth, when I raise the question at the outset, Do statistics shade the picture a little too darkly? I believe that the living Christ is doing a far grander work in the life of our nation than can be measured by the religious accommodation provided in churches and chapels. (Hear, hear.) We cannot, we would not, place the destinies of all those who are unable to find their places in the house of God in one pocket and label them "Doomed." We know full well the immense social difficulties which surround the lives of many of our countrymen, and which absolutely preclude them from attendance upon the house

of God. We know how many of our countrymen would be thankful to be listening to the word of God on the Sunday, but domestic cares compel their attendance at home. You Sunday-school teachers, if there are any here to-night, will know how the girls growing up in your classes, when they settle in life and the cares of home come upon them, find that from the advent of the first "little stranger" until the quiver is full of them, they never have a chance to go to the house of God. They cannot set aside these domestic and motherly cares which God has laid upon them, and hundreds and thousands of women in our land would be thankful to be under the ministry of the Word; but God's Providence has so placed them that they can only read the Word of God at home, and teach their children there. We know what it is to go to men when they are sinking very low, and to hear them tell the tale that they have been brought to God in the very closing hours after a godless life, when the memories of early teaching, in the school or in the house of God, have been brought back upon them through the years, and have been quickened into living forces. These men, though they were never found in the house of God, and could not swell statistics, have taken their place in the higher sanctuary, and stand before the Throne. And yet while one feels that statistics cannot for a moment measure the spiritual work that God is doing in this land, the state of things is sad enough. We have a large number of workers, we send out our Scripture-readers, our town and city missionaries, our Bible-women. We have large bands of voluntary Christians who are working continually the whole year round to bring the truth before the hearts of the people. We have all these agencies paid and unpaid, and yet, as the practical result, apart from church attendance, or church accommodation, we see the social life of to-day very sunken; we see a great deal of practical unbelief, outbursts of crime that shame us, misery and idleness following in the wake of sin, that compel us to ask sometimes, Is there a living Christ who looks upon it all, and has He died for them? Feeling then, how sad the whole position is, I want this evening, if you will allow me, to lay it upon your hearts and consciences as a burden which you have to bear, and a difficulty with which you have to deal. I know the question is sometimes raised, Are there resources enough in the Church to deal with these religious necessities? I believe that there are such mentally, pecuniarily, and spiritually. I believe that there are latent resources within the Church of God which have never yet been called forth; and I feel distinctly that the Free Churches of this country are on their trial just now before the criticism and judgment of the nation. The nation is looking at the question of disendowing and disestablishing the Episcopal Church of England, and one of the gravest problems that presents itself for solution is this, Can a disendowed Church deal with the religious necessities of the country? Is there sufficient generosity and devotion without the support of the State to meet all these spiritual claims? We are therefore on our trial; our voluntary principles of church life are now being tested and strained. If we can show that there is a power in Christian willingness to deal with all these wants, we have cleared one of the gravest practical difficulties out of the way of disestablishment. (Applause.) If, on the other hand, we feel that we are unable to deal with the wants of the nation by Christian willingness, then, much as I long to see the day, my mouth is closed in favour of disendowing the English Church. But I do not tremble for a moment in regard to our Free Church principles. I feel that we have done already a full half of all that is being done in this country, and we have done that by Christian willingness. I feel that the failure is as much the failure of a supported and endowed Church as it is the failure of the disendowed and voluntary agencies. Whatever measure of failure there is rests upon us all, and we feel that if the Free Churches of this country—confessedly the poorer half—have been able thus far to do quite its moiety of the spiritual provision which is made for our nation's want, the richer half is abundantly competent. It is as generous as we, as devoted as we, if only once the eyes of that large section of the Christian Church are opened to see the infinite blessing and freedom of Christian willingness, and of simple consecration to Christ. How shall we proceed to deal with these great religious wants? We have heard a great deal to-day about the necessity of church accommodation. No one will deny it for a moment. Well, shall we begin and build more churches? The Episcopal Church has done that; it has come forward, and, as we have heard in some districts of London, doubtless with a great amount of generosity and devotion, and has built splendid churches, and there they stand, empty. I remember a leader in the *Times* a short time since (betraying that amount of good sense which one occasionally finds in the columns of that journal), in which an appeal was made to the example of Nonconformists as a lesson to the Church of England—that while the Nonconformists grouped their hearers first of all in a little room, and as they swelled in numbers built a little mission-hall, and as they still increased

built a church to accommodate the pressing want; the Church of England, on the other hand, first erected its splendid structure and displayed its elaborate ritual, and then made it vain to the public to come and fill the pews. Well, I feel that that suggestion really touched the core of the difficulty. What we want is not so much to build more churches and chapels to create a demand for worshippers, but we want the influence of the masses of the people to create a demand for churches. (Applause.) Churches are, after all, very much the expression of religious life, as they are the creation of it; and it is just as far as we are able to influence the population around us until they shall become stirred by the truth and shall have opportunities to come and worship in the sanctuary of God and listen to a fuller and more careful ministry—it is just in proportion as we can do that, that the response will be made by rich Christians, and churches will be quickly roared by the dozens to meet a real want when the population declare that they require it. Shall we attempt in any way to organise more elaborately than we have done? Well, Christian friends, I am somewhat weary and hopeless of organisation amongst the variety of sects into which the Church of Christ is divided to-day. There is almost every variety of organisation that you can possibly desire, and yet the whole of us put together are feeling that our work is a comparative failure. As regards our organisation—well, it is very simple. And if we will not be in bondage to our own history, we can adopt what organisations we please and can graft upon our church life what practices may seem to us to be suitable. I think we can combine the very maximum of liberty with the very minimum of law; and if we will only adopt the practices which seem to us to be suitable for the particular period in which our lot is cast, we shall not require more stiff, hard, and fixed organisation in order to develop our Christian usefulness. But, after all, have we Christians really risen to the responsibilities of our position? I cannot help feeling that the position of the Christian Church to-day is not the position which Christ meant it to occupy. Christ has called us to a position of leadership and rule, and we are taking the position of followers, and almost of subjects. We are waiting, to a large extent, upon the world to dictate the customs of our life instead of leading the world by indicating to them those principles which Christ has laid down to us. We are adopting the practices of the world instead of asking them to adopt ours. We are, some of us, almost waiting upon the unsanctified intellect for our creed rather than receiving it straight from the Throne of God. We are followers, not leaders; pupils, not teachers; subjects, not kings. And Christ called us to be kings. I know that this claim of ours will be challenged, and challenged with a smile by the world around us. They almost regard us as intolerable, or, at least, with very great patience and kindness they will try to tolerate our continued existence in this advanced civilisation of the 19th century. We are somewhat of an anachronism; we belong to the earlier, simple, and less cultured ages of the world's life; but we can be scarcely tolerated to-day. Sir, we do not ask from the world toleration. I believe, ten days ago, one of His Majesty's advisers assured the Sultan of Turkey that all the crowned heads of Europe owed their position to the grace of his sublime Majesty, and the poor Sultan believed it. And we are asked to believe that we whom Christ has made kings unto God, are to be tolerated by the world, and are to owe our position and influence to their grace and kindness. We can take no such position. Christ said, "Ye are the light of the world"—not "ye ought to be," but "ye are the light of the world." He called us in that phrase to a position of leadership, to illumine the world's darkness, and not to allow its shadows to dim our brightness. Are we, as Christians, quite prepared to take the position of leadership to which our Lord has called us? You will understand me, I hope, not to be asserting any right to rule in the sense of arbitrary sovereignty. The Romish Church has tried that in past ages, has claimed that the king should hold the stirrup to the Pope, and that the whole civil power should be under the rule and control of the arbitrary will of the Church, as expressed in its leading potentates. We assert no such claim. There is a broad distinction between leadership and rule. We trace in our history kings who have honoured their diadem, under whose reigns our constitution has been developed in its simplicity, its stateliness, and strength; but we can trace, also, the influence of those unscrupulous sovereigns who to-day rule us from their urns. We feel that there have been leaders of our nation's life upon whose brows men have seen no crown, but they have led us on; they have kindled our genius; they have developed our ingenuity; they have conserved and utilised our forces, and they have led on this nation in the pathway of commercial and intellectual and political progress, and we owe our position to-day to the splendid leadership of their genius and their ingenuity. (Applause.) And I plead on behalf of the Church that she shall be able to lead, not to rule; that she shall be able to point men to something higher and to lead the way; that she shall be able to take her revelation from God, and to unfold

it before men as a trust which she has received from God, and which because it is a trust she dares not keep to herself. And now I want still further to press that this leadership is the work of the whole Christian Church. We hear of men born to be leaders. Have you ever heard of a man that was not born again to be a leader? It is the work of the whole Church of Christ to take the lead in the world's life. And surely as that work is consigned to the officials of the Church, or even to a few earnest representatives of the Church, so surely will our leadership be powerless. When the battle is at its fiercest and its hottest, if the soldiers in the ranks ground arms the officers may be as valiant as they please, but the tide of battle turns against them. And if you leave to the officials of the Church, to its constituted ministry, the work of dealing with the great spiritual necessities of the nation, you will yourselves be humiliated by seeing what will be pronounced to be great failure of the Christian Church, and we, if we are earnest at all, shall break our hearts upon a work which is too hard for us. It is the work, then, of the whole Church to lead. If you look at apostolic days, you will see that they were scattered abroad, went everywhere preaching the Word. They were not all gifted with great eloquence and talent, but in their own way they went preaching the Word. In Christ's time you will see that even Christ Himself was not competent to the task of a ministry over the whole land, and so He sends some back to their own home and friends to tell how great the things the Lord had done for them; and He sends others through the towns and villages to proclaim the words of everlasting life. It is the work of the whole Church. Have we, then, as Christians, the qualifications for leadership? I think in a leader we want the strength of confidence. No man can lead safely and effectually unless he is strong himself and strong enough to inspire confidence in those who follow him. Have we the confidence of strong conviction? We are not, in truth, the pupils of the world. We are not to go to men to learn what religious truth is. Men may teach us science, they may teach us commerce, they may teach us politics; they cannot teach us spiritual truth. We come to God for that, and we possess a revelation from Him. Have we perfect confidence in the authority of the truth which we are holding? Have we perfect confidence that these principles are true? These great truths have come straight from God Himself? I think the answer of a large number of the Christian Churches will be, "We know what we say and whereof we affirm. We know in whom we have believed; we speak to others that which we know, and testify that which we have seen." Well, that is one qualification for leadership if we have the strength of deep, settled, steadfast convictions. If we are not quite sure ourselves whether this Bible on which we base our hopes be a work of God or merely a work of man, then we had better not take the position of leadership; we had better step aside. If we are not quite sure whether the principles laid down in the Word are intended to apply to every department of life, then we have not steadfastness of conviction enough to take the position of leadership; but if we have strong, deep convictions—convictions by which we will live and for which we can die, we possess an element of power in that steadfast path, which will challenge the confidence of the world. After all, the world wants its leaders. It is groping its way in relation to spiritual truth; it is often bewildered; it is turning to the Church again and again, and making its appeal for guidance. And it wants from Christians to-day no uncertain sound. I am not going to encroach upon that line of thought, because it will be dealt with so much more effectively by Mr. Rogers, who will follow me. Let me, in the next place, say that for leadership we want more than strength—we want enthusiasm and passionate devotion. Let me illustrate what I mean. There is one of our Liberal leaders to-day, a man of great prudence and discernment; a man strong in his adhesion to what is righteous, honest, and true; a man of considerable powers and capabilities, possessing great courtesy and tact; and we are very thankful that we have such a man to lead us onward. Sometimes in difficulties, and at critical moments we are thankful to have a man who clearly sees his course before him, and who knows how to deal with foes that present themselves on every side, and who has one of the great advantages of a leader—knows a fool when he sees him, and knows how to answer a fool according to his folly. (Laughter.) We are thankful to have such a man as Lord Hartington to help us forward—(applause)—but when it is needful to arouse the enthusiasm of the nation, when the nation has to rise with passionate loyalty to righteousness, when its convictions are fused to white heat, then there is but one man who can step to the front and lead forward the people; there is but one man for whom the nation calls; the man who combines strength and passion, and whose loyalty to truth and righteousness quivers through every nerve and fibre of his nature, and that man—William Gladstone—can command the nation's confidence. (Loud applause.) Yes, there are arm-chair politicians, men who can sit quietly and scan all European life and never feel themselves moved to the depths of their being by any iniquity going on in their own or other lands. But arm-chair politicians do not profoundly move and lead the nation's life. And there are arm-chair Christians who can sit quietly and be utterly indifferent as to whether souls are saved or lost—men who can prize promises, who can rejoice in the security which Christ gives, but can never stir a single soul for Christ. These arm-chair Christians won't do for leadership. We want men of enthusiasm as well as men of strength. In what other directions can we exercise our leadership? Have we as Christians availed ourselves of all the opportunities which our social position presents to us for leading the life of men around us? In His providence God has placed us all in intimate and close daily connection with a large number of human lives. In that connection with human lives we have a sphere in which we may lead and may influence men's characters for good. Are we using all these opportunities? Are we influencing our home circles, and leading them on in all that is true and pure? Are we influencing our employed, our workmen, and interesting ourselves in their spiritual condition? Are we influencing our social circle of friends and acquaintances, and taking the lead, and helping them forward, and bringing them nearer to Christ? Before we mourn and pine for the want of splendid opportunities, let us learn to use the opportunities that we have, and we shall find that he that is faithful in the least shall be favoured with larger opportunities. Have we availed ourselves of all our religious liberty in order to lead the world? If to-day, as in days gone by, an embargo were laid upon all preachers of the Gospel, how we should chafe under the bondage and the tyranny! How we should rouse ourselves until every Christian at least was left free to proclaim the glad tidings of the Gospel to his fellowmen! Well, we have that power to-day. Are we using it? There is no law in our land that prohibits a single Christian man or Christian woman from preaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ to assemblies, large or small, whether in crowded sanctuaries or simply by the fireside in the cottage home; there is no law to hinder. Are we using our privileges? I know how many men say, "We gladly would, but we have not the gift or the talent." Christian brethren, may I venture to speak plainly in this matter? Many of you have the talent, and you are wrapping it in a napkin. You can stand before Boards of Directors and in meetings of shareholders, and you can expound a commercial policy that shall carry the votes of all the shareholders, and initiate a perfectly new movement in your mercantile life. Can you not expound in any way the plan of God to save a guilty soul? You can do it locally where money is concerned. Are you mute when souls are perishing? You can preach commerce, can you not preach Christ? Some of you can preach politically. You can go into your ward meetings, you can stand before political assemblies, you can make halls ring from end to end with your political eloquence and with your burning convictions. Tell me, can you deal only with politics and not with the policies of the spiritual kingdom? Can you conjure with the name of Gladstone, and can you do nothing with the name of Christ? If you have the power to present anything commercial, political, or intellectual in which you are deeply interested, it only needs that you be deeply interested in the progress of the Gospel of Christ, and you can expound it as faithfully and as eloquently as we. I am afraid I am encroaching somewhat upon the time of our friend who will follow me. I only wish in one word or two more to say, Are we in character leading the world? I fear very much that the hindrance lies here: that the character of the Christian Church to-day is not such as demands the thorough homage and respect of men. They see that somehow our religion is a religion of the Church and not the religion of the counting-house nor the religion of the drawing-room. That somehow we are prepared to say that principles will do very well as ideals, but they will not do for practical life. That somehow golden rules laid down in the Word of God are not so grand as laws of demand and supply. That there are great principles taught in the New Testament which it is impossible to bring to bear upon the trading relations or the social life of our land. Now, the great injury we are doing there is this, that we are impressing a careless world with the idea that Christianity is hollow, that it will not stand the test of daily life, that it only belongs to churches and to Sundays, and so they will occasionally listen to it on the Sunday, and they will forget it all the week. Are we in character leading the world? Are we prepared to say in our mercantile and political life that the principles which Christ has taught to us are very sacred, and that they should be carried out there as truly as anywhere else? If in character we can lead on, we shall influence the world's life. If we have the courage of our convictions, I am quite sure that in the course of time those convictions will command respect. It, perhaps, would be almost rude for me to ask the question, Can we ministers lead? And yet I know that Christian friends will feel that leader-

ship is not the work of the laity only; that the ministry must be prepared to lead as well. Far be it from me to throw out railing accusations against the Christian ministry. One knows so little, and, if one knew any accusation, one would not have the heart to bring it; but this I venture to say, that if we Christian ministers are not quite sure of our ground as regards the Divine authority of the Gospel which we preach, we had better not preach it. (Hear, hear.) If we Christian ministers are not quite sure that the Bible does come from God, we had better not ask men to base their eternal destinies upon it. I have no fear but that the convictions of the Christian ministry on this matter are in the main sound, and that they have confidence in the Divine authority and spiritual power of the Gospel of Jesus. And if it be so, then I would ask that we in our ministry shall be prepared to lead on. I know that it is the "silly season" now, and that men are writing to the papers laughing at our sermons, and telling us that sermons are rather an impertinence to-day; but this you will all endorse—that where there is a man that has power to preach there are men that are eager to hear; that where a man has the power to instruct or the power to impress, where a man's convictions are fused in his own nature, and he is burning with eagerness to impart them to those around, when he is quivering through every part of his spiritual being with the great truths which he wishes to convey, there you will find an audience that will listen respectfully, and will never ask that his sermon shall close in ten minutes. I have no fear of the preaching power of the age being on the decline. While there are human hearts longing for comfort and for salvation from sin, so long the ministry of the Gospel will fill its place in church life. So, sir, I think we may just leave all the difficulties of which I have spoken, and if only there be the sense of individual leadership through the whole Christian Church, we shall find that God is endowing us with greater spiritual power than we have ever possessed before. We do not know our power. You have never known yet, perhaps, what it is, many of you, to lay yourselves out definitely for one year to win a single soul. If there were only such success attained, and each Christian in the world to-day, each true Christian, were only the means of winning one soul to Christ in each year, why in about seven years the whole world would be consecrated to Christ. We do not know our power, and although the darkness does sometimes seem to be great, yet I feel sure that the day will dawn; and when darkness sees the morning stepping upon the mountains so grandly and so regally it may be that at first the darkness shall challenge the light of day to dawn as if it existed by its tolerance; but as the day comes upon the mountains and flashes down its radiance into all the vales until every little flower in the valley looks up with worship and loyal love to the sun, the darkness gazes spellbound at the sight, until it does not flee away, until it is "transformed into the same image," and the very darkness of the night is turned into the glory of day. So will it be with the world and the Christian Churches. We are the light of the world, and God will enable us to shed that radiance the wide world around. (Loud applause.)

THE SPIRITUAL MISSION OF THE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCHES.

Rev. J. G. ROGERS, B.A.: Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen.—There are a great many people outside us who have a notion that these meetings of the Church Congress, the Baptist Union, and the Congregational Union in the autumn constitute a kind of international match, and that when one side has had its innings, it is only right and proper that the other should come in and take their place at the wickets. They seem to think that there is some kind of antagonism and conflict between us as members of rival and opposing Churches. I am thankful to say that, perhaps, there has not been a year for some time past in which there has been less manifestation of the spirit of antagonism and a fuller exhibition of true, broad, Christian liberty and Christian charity than there has been at the three Congresses which have been held during the present autumn. Now, I am not going to begin to anticipate a millennium, and to fancy that we have come all at once into a position of such perfect and blessed peace that henceforth there shall be no division, no controversy, and no struggle between us. But I am here publicly, or, rather, before a more miscellaneous audience, to do what I ventured to do in the assembly of this Union on Tuesday morning—to express my high appreciation of the spirit which has been shown by some of the leaders of the Church of England in relation to us, and to tell them that they are judged by us with the same candour, the same frank recognition of their high excellence, and their conscientious devotion to principle, the same sense of the service which they are doing to the cause of Christ in this nation as they, at their Congress, showed to us and to our work. (Applause.) If I were to say to you or to any

audience that there are no differences between us, I should be playing the hypocrite, and that without the poor satisfaction of supposing that there was somebody who might, by possibility, be deceived by the imposture which I had practised. We have our controversies, and are sure to have them; but better even the worst sins of controversy, the uncharitableness, the meanness, the miserable misconstruction of each other, the unworthy artifices which are sometimes introduced into discussion for the purpose of getting an advantage over an opponent, than that Christian men should stand up and utter honeyed compliments which mean nothing, and are forgotten as soon as they are uttered. (Applause.) I will not speak, therefore, words of honeyed compliment. I frankly recognise that, in relation to a great many questions, we and the members of the Church of England must, to a certain extent, be adversaries. All that I hope is that we shall be adversaries who, in the midst of our antagonism, will never forget our common Christianity and our common relation to this great land which we both so ardently love. (Applause.) There is a rivalry between us, and that rivalry comes out in its best form, I hope, to-night. I do not quite accept the view that my friend, Mr. Symes, took in relation to the fact that the Free Churches are to-day on their trial. It is not the Free Churches only. I want this never to be forgotten, that whatever be the deficiencies that exist in the provision for the people of the present moment—whatever be the sad effects that have been left owing to rapid changes in the localisation of our people—whatever be the urgent cry at this moment for an increased effort and enlarged provision, the demand would have been overpowering, and the condition of this country would be little better than that of an unreclaimed waste, if it had been left to an agency such as that which was at work in the eighteenth century, when the Free Churches had not developed their power, and when the spirit of Christian willingness had not entered into the Established Church of this country. (Applause.) Sir, do you suppose that any of us regretted or mourned over the manifest indications of success to which the members of the Church Congress were able to point? Do you suppose that we for a moment think lightly of the splendid munificence which has put up great churches in various parts of the country? Do you suppose that we grudge even the generosity and liberality which are employed to endow new bishoprics—provided only the bishops are kept in their proper places, and not sent into the House of Lords? (Laughter.) Do you suppose that any of us grudge the Church of England the earnestness, the prayer, and the power which are so manifestly at work in her midst? God forbid! They are Christians like ourselves, and the nation needs us both. Why should we regret it? How can we regret it? It is our system, our spirit—the spirit of Christian willingness—that has done it, that has made even such inadequate provision as is made-to-day for the ever-growing wants of this increasing population. Then we have a rivalry, and that is the rivalry which brings us here to-night. In the conflicts which are going on in our nation, everything will depend mainly upon one point. Our Lord says that the "Life is more than meat, and the body more than raiment;" and that is true of the life of individuals. The Church which is to live and to lead—the Church which, as my brother has so eloquently and so ably said, is to be a power in this nation and vindicate its own authority and the authority of Christ, is not the Church which will be able to point to the many notes of catholicity which it enjoys, is not the Church which will be able to point to an unbroken line of apostolic succession, is not the Church which can rear the most stately structures and preserve the most imposing ritual, is not even the Church which will be able to gather into itself the greatest number of professed adherents; but it is the Church which shall be able to nurture the most robust and earnest piety, the Church which shall do most to win this nation for Jesus Christ, the Church which shall prove its right to live by the fact that it shows the energy, and the inspiration, and the force of true spiritual life. And our own rivalry ought to be this: that in such a contest as ours, we should be able to do our share of work in relation to the great difficulties and problems and dangers of the age. I want simply to look at one of them to-night. I want to see how far our Congregationalism does seem to have any fitness, and particularly how far it has any special fitness, for dealing with the prevalent unbelief of the times—let me rather say, the popular unbelief of the times. I am not going to utter a mournful confession as to the condition of the Christian faith at the present moment. There are those who are continually telling us that it is passing away; that if it is not an effete superstition to-day, it will very speedily be so; that the intellect of the world is going away from the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Sir, I not only do not believe it, but I believe that the real power of unbelief in this country to-day, and especially its comparative power when it is tested by the earnestness and force employed against it in the Christian Church, is not as great in this country as it was ten, twenty, and, still more, fifty years ago. I am aware that many

things seem to look in a contrary direction: I am aware that there is a certain circle in which there is a cant of unbelief—it is supposed to be the cant of culture; and a great many people, even if they are not cultured, are quite capable of taking up this cant; they can do nothing better, and they get a cheap reputation for intellectuality by proclaiming themselves on the side of unbelief. I am aware of all that; but when I look abroad on this great nation with all its weaknesses and errors and faults, with the evils over which we mourn, above all, with the practical evils of intemperance prominent amongst them against which we have to contend—I still see indications which prove to me that the Gospel of Christ is not losing its hold upon the popular mind. It may be that the religious instinct that prevails is very often a mere instinct; it may be that the conceptions of Christianity are exceedingly weak and unintelligent; it may be, and is, true that in the case of numbers the hold upon the essential verities of the faith is extremely weak. But at the same time I have only to look back upon the history of the last two or three years and to think of the recoil that there has been from time to time when there has been anything indicating an advance towards the boldness of unbelief, and still more, I have only to think of the wonderful power that the Church of Christ possessed in awakening the conscience of this nation in opposition to its pride, and to all the intoxicating influences which are employed to drag it into passion and into ambition. I say I have only to look at the resurrection of the national conscience in opposition to these things to believe that underneath all that is evil and all that is menacing, there lies a deep conviction that there is a God who ruleth in heaven, and that Jesus Christ is the Son of the living God. (Applause.) I do not want to count that as worth more than it really is; but I do not like people to be carried away, as I find some Christian people occasionally are, with craven fears and alarms. I quite admit that unbelief is very active. I admit that there is a good deal that demands our most serious and earnest thought and effort if we would effectually resist it, and resist it not simply in the way of producing and strengthening a popular instinct, but in converting men to the faith of Jesus Christ. I do not say that Congregationalists alone can do the work. I do not even contend that they can do it better than other people: all I want to impress upon you is that we have certain features in our Church life and system, certain points in our history, which make us especially competent to deal with certain forms of that unbelief, and which give us a hope that if we are true to our Lord we may do great service for Him as well as for our country and our generation. In the first place, it is something for us that we are not hide-bound by forms and creeds. I am not going to sail away under false pretensions. I should be sorry that you should go away with the conception that Congregationalism had no creed. If we have no creed, we have nothing to say. "We believe," says the apostle, "and therefore we speak." If we do not believe, let us, in the name of truth and righteousness, cease from speaking, for we have nothing to say. If we have no creed, then we have no message to the nation, and we have no place, and we shall have no power, in the nation. At the same time, we are free from creed. Now creeds, for the most part, are ancient and venerable documents, and there is a great tendency on the part of many people to make light of them and hold them up to ridicule. I cannot exactly do that. If I look at them in their true character—take the very worst creed of all, the Athanasian Creed, with its elaborate clauses, with its definitions, all of which require to be defined, and with its undertaking to convert mere matters of opinion into points upon which the eternal judgment of God has pronounced—take that creed, there is not a line in it that has not some tender and interesting association connected with it; there is not one of its clauses that has not had its point of interest in the past history of the Church. It is not our creed, perhaps; and we may perhaps, feel that it would be very difficult to say whether it was or was not; nevertheless, it has been the creed of multitudes of holy men and women, and I cannot look upon it without some degree of respect, however I am opposed to it. I think of these old creeds as having nurtured the devotion and zeal of men in the hour of their struggle and difficulty. I think of them as they have been conned over and cherished in the silence of the closet, or, perhaps, in the confinement of the dungeon. I think of them as having formed the basis of those noble confessions which many a martyr has witnessed in the sight of many witnesses and at the cost of his life; and if you will only leave them to me as memorials of the way in which the Church has been working on towards a simple appreciation of the truth itself, I can feel that there is something in them which touches a reverent and devout feeling in my own heart. But what I object to is to be bound by the tyranny of the past. I want the past to be an inspiration and not a bondage. (Applause.) What expressed the faith of men a hundred years ago may not express their faith to-day. And I do not want to be called upon to subscribe to a creed when, after I have given my subscription, the next thing I have to do is to interpret it, and having interpreted it, to explain the interpretation, and having given an explanation, then to qualify it; and then when I have done the whole, to say that of course the document cannot be accepted in its perfectly natural sense. (Laughter) I do not wish to be bound in that way, and I think it is a great difficulty for any man who stands up to preach to other men if there is lurking in the minds of those to whom he is speaking a secret suspicion that there are articles in the creed which he professes that really have been relegated to the past, and to which he would not give his full adhesion to-day. Then it does seem to me that in the time of difficulty and peril, when we have to face an enemy, the wisest and truest policy is to concentrate our strength. When we heard a short time ago of the disaster that had overtaken our arms in the neighbourhood of Candahar, the first intelligence that came was that the general had drawn in his soldiers from the outposts, that wherever there was a point untenable, he had abandoned it, and that he had gathered his forces and concentrated them upon the citadel. That ought to be our action as Christian men. We have a creed. If we have outposts, it is not necessary for us to stand and dispute about the outposts when the very citadel is in danger. We go to the nation with a simple message; about that there can be no compromise, no uncertainty. If we dare to stand in a pulpit without speaking that message, we do it to our own soul's peril and responsibility. We have the message; we make it as simple as we can; we tell the world that we come to it with the same Gospel that Paul preached; that Jesus Christ died for our sins, and that He rose again according to the Scriptures. (Applause.) Now, sir, I say that those who can go and preach to men unbound, untrammelled, having this creed—having it not as a creed which they hold, but a creed which holds them—have a special power of dealing with unbelief. Then there is a second advantage. We Congregationalists have no priests among us. Now, do not mistake me. I am not going to make any grand parade about our freedom from priesthood, nor do I suppose that unbelievers always recognise the difference which we see very clearly between a priest and the minister of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. A friend of mine told me he was talking with a working man who had made considerable progress in the direction of unbelief, and who was, at the same time, equally advanced in his political opinions. He said, "Do not suppose, for a moment, sir, that we people make any distinction between you and others; priests and parsons are all the same with us, as you will find when the days of our Republic come, and we have the same fate for you all." Now there may be something in that—that as we belong to a professional class as ministers of the Gospel, those who are opposed to that Gospel may have a prejudice against us under the idea that our profession is the profession of the priests. Brethren, I say to all of you—you who are brethren of the ministry in this place—if there is one thing that is more necessary than another for us to impress upon the people in England, especially those who are exposed to the temptations of unbelief, it is this, that we are not priests; and we must show that we have not the priestly temper as well as that we do not celebrate priestly rites. What is the priestly temper? In the first place, it is a belief in personal infallibility, and we have no right to claim that. The highest commendation pronounced upon any people in the Acts of the Apostles is that pronounced upon the Bereans, who did not accept what the apostle said, but went and "searched the Scriptures to see whether these things were so." It is a far grander thing for a minister to raise a people who will think for themselves, than for him to train a people who simply accept whatever he says as true. (Applause.) Then a priest must necessarily be, to a certain extent, conventional, and the less we have of conventionalism in our appearance the better, saving the white choker, of course. (Laughter.) Yes, I reserve the white choker as matter of consideration for weaker brethren—(laughter)—and at the same time as a little tribute to *les convenances*. But beyond that we must not imagine that we have some special character because we put on something in the shape of a special dress. Everything purely conventional, let us throw away. Above all, let us not show the priestly temper in thinking more of "tithe of mint, anise, and cummin," than of the "weightier matter of the law, judgment, righteousness, and truth." Let us try to go as men amongst men, not to give them the conception that we are condescending and stooping to them because we exercise a particular office. Let us encourage them to bring us their doubts, not frowning upon the sceptic when he comes and asks us for help in his trials and difficulties. Let them understand that our purpose is, after the fashion of the prophet of old, to say—"Come now, let us reason together and see whether these things be so or not." Oh, my brethren, be true men, faithful to Christ, faithful to the voice that is in you, faithful to the Gospel, and you will have a power that no priesthood can by any possibly possess. (Applause.) Then I think I may say what my friend has just

said, that our system gives us unbounded freedom and elasticity in all our methods, whether in worship or action. That is an advantage of which we ought not to be slow to avail ourselves. I confess I am getting to feel that, provided there is no violation of proper decorum, I care not who it is that can draw men, if he really does draw them to Christ. I do not say if he makes an excitement, and gathers crowds around him for a time; but I care not who he be, or what means he may employ, if he but draws his fellow-men to Christ. I shall not ask whether he scatters his H's in wild profusion at every step he takes; I shall not ask whether he speaks according to the rules of logic or of grammar; still less shall I ask whether he has received any training or "orders"; nor will I even ask whether his methods are such as I can adopt. No, brethren, be sure of this, in the infinite variety of mind and diversity of culture with which we have to do everywhere around us, we need a corresponding variety of instruments, and God be praised for every man and for every method by which souls are won to Jesus Christ. (Applause.) Then I think I may say our traditions and our history as Independents ought to secure for us a certain amount of favour with those who like progress and what they call liberal thought. I believe there are some people who fancy we are ashamed of the name of Independents, and that we are ashamed of the history of Independents. Sir, instead of blushing with any shame for our glorious Independent ancestry, my only hope is that when we have ceased to fill our places, and when our names, like theirs, have passed down the tide of history, our posterity will have no reason to blush for us because we have been unfaithful to the glorious ancestors who bore the name of Independents, and have but poorly emulated the great deeds which they did for their religion, their liberty, their country, and their God. (Applause.) It seems to me that English people are very fond of Independence, that they are one grand nation of Independents. With the exception, I suppose, of a few toadies to be found here and there, we are a nation of Independents. The great qualities which have made England what she is are the very qualities of independence, self-reliance, simple courage, and a love of managing our own affairs. They have done wonderful things for the English people and for ourselves. If ever there was a place in which one might speak of that, it is in this Town-hall of Birmingham. I suppose the most independent people in England are the people of Birmingham. And what has their independence done? I understand that twenty years ago there were living in Birmingham those who could remember the time when there was only one close carriage kept in the town, and that, I suppose, cannot be more than fifty or sixty years ago. Look at what Birmingham is to-day! It preserves to this hour some of the traditions and memories of its village life—more, I am told, than any community in the country; and yet you who have walked along the town have seen the grand buildings that are rising on every side. There is a great looking-glass manufactory to which my attention has been directed again and again by a brother who insists that it must be a chapel or a church or some great public structure. Wherever we go we see signs of improvements which are being carried on by your corporation with a lavish profusion that seems regardless of expense, but with a skill, wisdom, and decision which do infinite credit to every man by whom the work is conducted. Here you have the signs of your independence. That independence has made Birmingham what it is to-day. That independence places Birmingham in the forefront of progress in this great English nation. That independence has trained for Her Majesty's counsels one of your own citizens—(loud applause)—a man who has given proof in his public life of that sturdy independence which has made him what he is, and who has shown what self-government in a municipality will do to develop the highest qualities for national rule and for public leadership. (Applause.) That independence of yours lifted you up so far above the paltry prejudices of the time that, in a day when one of our greatest and noblest statesmen was suffering for conscience' sake, suffering for his fidelity to the cause of righteousness and peace, you recognised his worth and made him your representative—(loud applause)—and you honoured Birmingham by linking its name for ever with that of a statesman than whom none has ever shown so great a force of eloquence or a greater purity of character or greater nobility of motives or more earnest devotion to the cause of liberty and of Christ. (Loud applause.) But observe, it is not you alone; and it is not in our commercial and municipal matters alone that independence is loved. Independence is growing very rapidly where I should least expect it to manifest itself. Whenever a congregation in the Establishment comes across a difficulty of its own, when it has a minister it does not like, immediately its members begin to cry out, and such admirable representatives of the Establishment as the *Spectator* second the cry—for Independence; they talk it without knowing it, they want the right

of government within their own Church, and that is precisely what we want. We are not ashamed of our Independency, we have no need of lowering our flag, or hiding our name, or concealing one of our traditions. Has there been a single contest for liberty during the last three hundred years in which Independents have not played a foremost part? Has there been a single boon won for this English people, which during that period the Independents have not helped to secure? Has there been a single right, whether for Roman Catholic or unbeliever or Jew—a single right of religious freedom, which has been conceded that Independents have not helped to win? Why, sirs, our history bids us be proud, and thank God for the men whose names we bear and preserve, that legacy of Independency, which they have handed down to us! (Applause.) Now I think that gives us a wonderful power in dealing with an age in which there is such a love of freedom. Now, the questions comes, how are we to use this power which has been given to us? We stand here to-night in view of the Jubilee year of our Union, and it does seem singular that at a time like this, there should be a meeting of this kind, especially devoted to the purposes of our religious work in this nation. We have to make what is called a new departure. Let us begin it by first laying to heart that verse of the old Book, "The heart of the liberal devieth liberal things, and by liberal things shall he stand." I perfectly agree with my friend Dr. Kennedy, that if we go in for small things we shall have smaller; and if we go in for great things, we shall be able to do something in this coming year for the extension of all those agencies by which this nation is to be blest and Christ is to be glorified. No paltry sum, the standard of which is derived from the past, must be set before us as the aim of our ambition for the future. We have a grand opportunity. God will stir us up, I trust, to some measure of zeal and earnestness in order that we may use it. Let it not be said of us that we lost our crown, and that it was left to another to do the work which by our unfaithfulness we have neglected. Oh, sirs, it is a great work that is before us to-day. I have told you to-night that I have no fears of the future, no fear of the progress of unbelief. I should be a craven-hearted minister of Jesus Christ if I doubted either the power of His Gospel or the truth of His promise. I should be false to all my convictions, and all that I have learned from history, if I could believe that we were going, in spite of the agencies which are at work for Christ, from bad to worse. We are doing nothing of the kind. But still unquestionably we are threatened with a formidable attack upon the foundations of our faith; and in the struggle on which we are entering, there are those, it may be, weak and timid, who may be carried away by the seductive influences of a specious rationalism or a daring unbelief. Think what the triumph of that unbelief would mean! Think what is meant by the acceptance of the new notions that find such favour in some quarters. We may have one who has all the charms of personal goodness, and all the honours that are due to transcendent wisdom; he may be recognised as the very type and model of all that is noble and great in character; but we shall not have the Son of God, we shall not have the Christ. And, sirs, to lose Christ is to lose everything. Think what that means. It means the drying up of every stream of moral and spiritual influence which has come from the Cross. It means the silencing of all those consolations which have been ministered to the penitent in the agonies of remorse, to the mournful in the time of sorrow, to the dying in the prospect of immortality. It means the taking away of all those forceful influences to which England owes her grand works of charity and benevolence. It means the loss of the mightiest impulses which have ever been communicated to the spirit of freedom, and by which men have ever been carried upward and onward in the progress of humanity. It means silencing ultimately the name of God. It means the closing of all our churches and sanctuaries with every influence which they disseminate around them. It means the confinement of our nation to one dark and dreary experience of despair and of unbelief. And it is from this that we have to save the people. There are anxious, trembling, troubled souls that are crying to us for help. There are doubting ones who need us to strengthen them. There are men who are almost crushed under the burden of their iniquities and griefs in relation to the eternal future, who want our help and our guidance; and God sends us that we may give them this light, the glorious Gospel of the blessed God.

An ivy in a dunzeon grew,
Unfed by rain, unwept by dew,
Its pallid leaflets only drank
Cave moistures foul and odours dank.
But through the dungeon's grating high,
There fell a sunbeam from the sky.
It slept upon the grateful door
In silent gladness evermore.
The ivy felt a tremour shoot
Through all the branches to its root;
It saw the light, it felt the ray,
It strove to blossom into day.
It strove, it crept, it grew, it clomb.
Long had the darkness been its home;
And when it knew, though veiled in night,
The goodness and the joy of light,
By dew and rain and sunshine fed,
Over the outer wall it spread,

And in the daybeam waving free,
It grew into a steadfast tree.
Wouldst grow the moral of the rhyme?
Show men God's heavenly light to climb (?)
O'er every dungeon pour the ray
Of God's illimitable day."

(Loud applause.)
The Rev. H. BACHELOR proposed a vote of thanks to Mr. Symes and Mr. Rogers, which was unanimously adopted. He then brought the proceedings to a close by pronouncing the benediction.

ADDRESSES TO YOUNG MEN.

On Friday evening a public meeting for young men was held in the Town Hall. The chair was taken by the Rev. Dr. Newth.

The proceedings commenced by singing a hymn, after which the Rev. J. SHILLITO offered prayer.

THE SECRET OF SUCCESS IN LIFE.

The Rev. T. WILLIS, of Manchester, was the first speaker. His subject was "Success in Life, and the Secret of that Success." At the outset he reminded them of the old adage that "nothing succeeds like success." Oftentimes there was too much truth in this old saying, for the man and the cause might be none of the best, but they were applauded because successful. It was manifestly of importance to get success before them in its truer and nobler form, refusing to countenance it unless associated with what was lawful, worthy, and good. To make life in this sense successful was an ambition worthy of each one of them. Nothing but good could come from their frequently pressing home upon heart and mind the inquiry, how can life in the truest and highest form be made a prosperous life? And such an inquiry was especially appropriate in their case. They were starting out into life. Humanly speaking, there was a long future before them, and, to a large extent, God had put that future into their own hands; so that whether it was a failure or a success would greatly depend upon themselves. This was the seed-time of life, and by their conduct now would be determined the beauteous summer and the fruitfulness of autumn. They might not become rich, or rise to high social position, or attain to fame in the world of science and literature, and yet every young man, in his sphere, might so live as to justify him in believing, when the end of life drew nigh, that he had lived for some worthy purpose, and that, in a measure at least, his life had been a success. Was there one thing more than anything else which, when possessed by young men, would supply a guarantee that life would be well and honourably and successfully employed by them? There was that one thing, and it was known by the name of piety, than which there was nothing so well fitted to aid them in life, and help to make that life worthy and great. It might be asked what was piety. It was this—a firm faith in God, attended with a passionate love for Him and a cheerful obedience to Him. This was piety, and this he prayed them to have in possession, as supplying the best possible pledge that their life would not be in vain. The creed of Atheism, that there was no God; the creed of Pantheism, that God was not to be distinguished from His works, and was destitute of personality; the creed of Agnosticism, that God was unknowable—these were not the creeds that they desired their children to accept. (Applause.) Whatever they lost, let them keep hold of God—the living, personal, loving God. Let them have faith in Him—a strong, unflinching faith—and let such faith be associated with intense affection for God and cheerful compliance with His will. This was piety, and he could not, if worlds were given to him for it, mention any one thing which would prove of such service to them as this, in helping them to make the most and the best of life. Piety would be beneficial to life in its physical or bodily aspects by the temper it encouraged and the habits it helped to form; it would enable them the more surely to make the most of their bodily life. Piety was exceedingly helpful to mental culture; it was the enemy of ignorance and the friend of learning. Piety would be found of special service to life in its moral and spiritual aspect. If there was one thing more than another needed by those beginning life, it was the possession of power to enable them to keep from sin, and to do that which was right. It would also be of the greatest possible service if life was considered in its more active and useful aspects; and from all their considerations it was clear that the most certain guarantee for life being successful in the broadest and best sense was to be found in piety. Perhaps they might find abundant confirmation of this by calling to mind the aged ones, beautiful in their old age, happy in the fruits of a God-fearing life, and enraptured with the eternal prospects before them. Were they permitted to speak from that platform their message would be one of loving exhortation, urging them to give themselves to God in the prime and vigour of their days. Hamilcar, the Carthaginian general, made his son Hannibal, when a boy, vow wrath against the Romans, his country's greatest enemy. That boy grew up in remembrance of his vow, and he faithfully kept it. That night he placed before them a more worthy vow and a nobler service, and so he did beseech and pray that those who had not hitherto resolved, would now determine to stand by the God of their fathers. There never was greater need than at present for men of this stamp—men who, being good themselves, should help onward the higher interests of mankind, thereby securing to themselves a glorious old age, and a more glorious eternity. (Applause.)

THE INHERENT POWER OF CHRISTIANITY.

The Rev. Dr. PULSFORD, of Glasgow, was the next speaker. He said his first word was, let them all learn frequently to take stock of themselves, to look round about and see what were their relations with men and things. This was especially important for Christian young men, because if they were not individually able and efficient, they were nothing. They had no organisations to look to of any moment. They were very jealous of associations which tended to fetter or weaken the central powers of their individual life. If, then, they were to maintain their efficiency as individuals, they must constantly look to the fountain sources of their life and being. If they, as Independents, were not men of courage, men of intellectual bearing, men who knew what Israel ought to do, then they were lost amid the hosts of Israel. They were but a little band; but they carried on a guerrilla warfare, where every man was bound to have a name and a nature, and not merely a number. (Applause.) As Christians, they derived that name from One who was mighty in this respect—namely, mighty in life-giving power. He, solitary and alone in this world, simply made His disciples by the attractions of His person and the spirit which He breathed into them. What was that power by which Christ won His disciples, and by which He hoped to fulfil the promise He gave to them with respect to the world at large? It was a power that was born. He knew of no power that was not born. So they were told of Christ that He was born of the Virgin, and whatever He was was born with Him and in Him. Whatever they became they were born with the powers of that becoming, and the power which Christ gave to those who received Him was a power to be born "not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God," and in that birth they received that which was not only their greatest but their most glorious distinction. Nothing they could acquire or learn could, for a moment, be put in comparison to that which they received by the birth. And while what was born was one thing what was natured was an equal requisite. Christ was natured as well as born. He was born in helplessness, as every other babe; but as He grew in stature they were told He was filled with the Spirit, and grew in wisdom, and in favour with God and man. They must be fully natured to enter into their inheritance in this world, and so with their spiritual life. If they were only babes with respect to the kingdom of heaven they would remain impotent as babes, helpless as babes, and useless as babes, and only when they were natured would they receive their inheritance, or have powers with which to enter into its possessions. Not only was Christ born from heaven, and natured according to what He was born, but that which was born and natured expressed itself in corresponding activity; any life that did not end in action had not reached its proper termination. The spiritual life of their Master was no ideal vacuity of thoughts, or opinions, or segments of doctrine, or any other form of mental expression that had not spiritual form and substance underlying it. He was a man, built up spiritually or physically, and His work in this world was to build men—men with a human heart purified and enlarged, with a human character enabled, with a perfect form of humanity, and that perfect form glowing, and as such mighty in all its powers and influence. He was never one thing in thought, another thing in disposition, and something else in action. How common was that among men. There were some who, if they asked them for their thoughts, they would think they were angels—(laughter)—if they looked at their dispositions they would think they were devils, and if their conduct was looked at oftentimes they were more like beasts than men. (Applause.) Because of this diversity of nature they were without power, a trouble and a burden to themselves, and a disgrace to their name as to their nature. Christ, because He was in perfect harmony, thought, feeling, conduct, was mighty. What, then, was the power which Christ exercised in the world?—that power by which His disciples exercised such a mighty influence, that power which they professed, in some measure, to possess? What had it done? It had changed the face of the world. It had given throughout the civilised world a marvellous reverence for individual life, it had given to woman her becoming peace and dignity—(applause)—it had given to the administration of justice ten thousand ameliorations which could be traced to no other source. Christ was the fountain source from whence all this had come. (Applause.) The world was not the same world since he breathed in it; the earth was not the same since they could mark His pathway over it. What was that power? It was not force; it was not the force of miraculous power; it had nothing of an official authority, it was not the power of intellectual conviction nor the power of personal observance of religious proprieties. What then was it? Simply the

power of a person, self-possessed, self-knowing, self-devoted, because heaven and God inspired, and, therefore, open to receive all the powers of the heavenly world. He embodied that power of which all things are vessels, all things are channels, all things are instruments, and it centred in Him, and He became personal and exercised that personality. What was that? More than he could explain. It was only fragmentary things that were capable of exhaustive explanation: higher things and highest things they could not explain, He could tell them what light did, but not what it was. The power of man in his highest state was influence—the overflow, the effluence of his nature and character, and all that he was. This was a power that could not be assumed, it could not be lessened, it could not be destroyed. Let them all, then, strive to be men. More than men they could not be. If they were less than men, their own nature would curse them. Let them be men—fully natured men, fully inspired men; then they would prove that there was no power with God like human, and no power with men like man. (Loud applause.)

The Rev. Dr. FAIRBAIRN, Principal of Airedale College, then addressed the meeting. He said: Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen, Young Men and Maidens—I stand here to-night a conspicuous and a speaking proof of the immense power that lives and acts embodied in my friend, Mr. Dale. (Applause.) I came to this town yesterday a speechless man, happy as a speechless man ought to be, blithe and gay as a lambkin on the hillside, eager to browse on all the fine things all the fine speakers were to say, delighted to be able to criticise uncriticised myself. (Laughter.) But in an unlucky moment I visited the platform. Mr. Dale came behind me, and, with the imperial gentleness that characterises him—(laughter)—changed me from a speechless man into a man who had to speak, and the speech of the man once altogether speechless was to be to young men. Well, I work for young men. (Hear, hear.) I speak to them every day, and find the heart, the hope, and the courage to live and to work patiently expectant of results that ripen slowly, but gloriously yield. Our young men are the world's hope. In them the hope of the world lives. What is we may love; but the infinite cheer of hope is born of what is to be. I do not know that I would care to live and to work were it not for the essential manhood evolved, or capable of evolution, that lives in our young men, and that makes it cheerful and holy to be engaged in the making of the men who are to be the ministers of the future, and the makers of its essential manhood. Wordsworth said man was in youth a prodigal's favourite; in age a miser's pensioner: but it depends how man uses the prodigal gifts of youth whether he be a pensioner in age. Young manhood, young maidenhood are inexplicably beautiful. Time lives in them, age, and eternity, too. Time, with all its promises, makes them glorious buds of being, working into fragrance, bursting into flower. Nature is clothed with a glory, apparelled in a celestial light all their own. Life is full of meaning—divine and beautiful. Man is not a being to be despised, but contains infinite promise to hope. In age there is the sad side, there is the sober colour. Ripe experience, rich in wisdom, is seldom rich in generous aspiration that give its deepest meaning to life; yet, he who in youth can realise and dream of grand things his manhood has to realise, he who in youth is equal to the divine intent as to the young, ripens into an age that is more glorious even than youth, and into a later beauty sublimer and diviner than the earlier dreamt of. Now, if young men and young maidens, too, ought to have any notes of their youth clearer, brighter than others, they should be these two, love of truth and love of goodness. These loves imply two things, great faith and a great hope. Faith, for they must believe truth is, to love it: they must believe that goodness is to regard and follow it. A great hope is born of the belief that there is truth at the heart of the universe, and that all its meanings and seeds are true. Where man believes in a living goodness he cannot but hope; because he knows that active, strong, it shall go on ruling victoriously to the end, and bringing in a diviner day. Now without these great loves I cannot understand a young man. He who is without them has lost youth without acquiring age. ("Hear, hear.") I know nothing more impotent than a young man with the heart of a cynic, with the soul of a worker. ("Hear, hear.") There are times when cynicism is might, and there are places, perhaps, where it never fails to produce a disbelief in virtue. There is a knowledge of things that were better unknown; there is a courageous ignorance far nobler, far better than a depraved knowledge. The man who can dare to be ignorant that he may be innocent has in him the making of a right noble man. (Applause) Find the cynic, the young, cynical man laughing at Him who made the world, sneering at the heroism that inspired the heroes of society—find him, and you will find a man you can never kindle into enthusiasm for human rights or get angry at a great human wrong. The man who simply mocks at right is potent only for the wrong—(applause)—and he who would keep his soul right with God must dare to be ignorant of evil, to pursue the path of innocence in the

face of temptations to a knowledge that is wrong and a cynicism that is base. Now, if there is to be a love of truth, there is truth to be loved. Where is it? What is it? How is it to be found? Now the question "What is truth?" is inextricably bound up with the question, Where are we to seek it, by what means, by what method, along what way? A distinguished man of science lately in Birmingham sang the praises of science as an instrument of education potent above literature, and found in it the true teacher of the future. A year or two before in this hall a distinguished friend and brother in science had enlightened you by a discourse which illustrated the unscientific uses of the imagination, and showed what a fine poetic interpretation of the human soul could be given by terms of matter and motion and force. They tell us the way to truth is the grand new way of observation and experiment; science can give it, and science only. But whither, oh men—whither do you lead? Bear you the spirit forward, carry you mind on, till mind and fact, till man and truth, stand face to face, open-eyed and clear? That same brilliant lecturer who expounded his theory of the soul here to the enlightenment and joy of your intelligent and active town, had a year or two previously enlightened the British Association as to the grand progress of scientific inquiry; how it had gone on and on and on, till it had found the very beginnings of things. And what had it found? That the beginning, the father of all things, may be named—matter. Matter, he said, contained the promise and the potency of every form and every quality of life. So here we are, it seems, at the primal science of being. Good. But let us understand what it means—"Matter." Pray what is it? Our expositor goes on to say, "Hard to understand or tell what matter is. Some philosophers have thought it was a state of consciousness. Some philosophers have thought that it is a symbol of an external reality. Some philosophers have named it a 'form of thought,' and cannot tell what it is—it is mysterious, it is insoluble, it is the great inexplicable, the absolutely unknown. I only know that it is the cause of our sensation. Stated in plain terms, this means—our Creator—the cause alike of knowledge and being, the unknown, the inexplicable, the mysterious, which contains the promise and potency of every form and quality of life." And this is called science. (Applause.) Science is knowledge, but what leads up to absolute ignorance as its end, may be nescience, but is not science. But now if you cannot get to the ultimate cause there is a grand new method that explains the whole process of its action, the grand simple way in which it works. Creation ceases, there is no creation; evolution is, evolution reigns, and its law is the law of continuity which everywhere prevails. Now it would surprise a common-sense person who did not happen to be initiated in the grand secrets of nescient science—it would puzzle and perplex such a simple person were he to discover that the process evolutionary that produced creation was not still a creative process. I believe in evolution, I hold law of continuity, but I am faithful absolutely to both. How are you to interpret the great evolutionary law? Are you to go back, back, back till you find an abstraction that you term "unknown" or "mysterious," or "matter" which, as "matter" that you do not know, is no matter to you. Or, are you to begin at the end, and ask—What is that? in order that reason may discover what caused the what is to be? Evolution, if it means anything, means this—that nothing emerges in the process that is not contained in the source—nothing emerges in the result that does not run back into the cause. Thought emerges; it stands at the end, and we ask, "How do you explain the becoming of thought?" Where do you find it enter in your grand evolutionary process? at what point in your grand developmental change? They tell us, in exquisite terms, and with beautiful illustrations, how the growing complexity of the organism is ever attended with the growing development of thought, but just as the organism grows more complex, mind begins the more to appear, till in the most complex organised beings you have ripened, articulate mind. But they say, with delightful simplicity, with that lowly simplicity that marks the belligerent man possessed by a fine phrensy against theology, of science of to-day. How to pass between the organism and thought we cannot tell; a man might as well attempt to lift himself by his own waist-band as to explain why, with the complex organism, mind and thought are associated. Where, then, is the continuity in your evolutionary process? Here is a result your premises or your germ does not contain. You undertake to explain the universe, and you fail to explain its distinctive glory; you fail to explain thought. You say all became according to a natural law, a law of continuity that has had no break, yet you come upon a great spiritual fact that you have not explained, that is a break in the natural order that your law does not explain, that stands absolutely apart from all your processes and all your facts. What is your process worth when, though used for a purpose that professes to be scientific, it yet ends in inability to explain the grand cardinal reality? This modus of beginning is bad; it is beginning at the wrong end. Instead of

working back by an abstractive process to this primordial cause unknown, and seeking to interpret it in the terms of matter, motion, and force, they ought to start with the great last result. Mind can explain the universe; the universe, interpreted in the terms of matter, motion, and force, cannot explain mind. Thought is in man; you read the universe through thought. But if it culminates in thought, thought was at its source. If the law of evolution buds and blossoms into mind, the law of evolution started from mind, is guided by mind to its termination in mind. What is in a conclusion must be in the premises, or it is false. What is in the bud must be in the germ, or it is a foreign element. What is in the universe in its last great flower is in its root; the first great cause is mind, because the last effect into which it blossoms is mind. What culminates in mind came out of mind. (Applause.) Rank the scientific method at its value. Do not think it can lead to truth; that is the work of spirit, consciousness, heart. Be true to truth: that is Divine. Seek it in the Divine way, through the reason within, through the heart, through the great inspired Word in history, and the Person that is its source. That leads us to our second point—only one syllable if possible—the love of goodness. Science cannot give you the moral, cannot impersonate in a living being the great truths that man needs. Young men and maidens, this world without truth, without the moral, the ethical, the spiritual, would be a world held by the hands of a merciless fate that man's spirit would contemn and abhor. Think of the very greatest circle of natural truths, those most calculated to awe and elevate the soul. Think, when Copernicus read the secret of the heavens—when Kepler unfolded the mystery of the stars—when Newton spelled out the glorious law that held them in harmony—what a wondrous change passed over the thoughts of men. This world—small, almost infinitesimal, a little globe in its vast immensity—moved through light, through darkness, in storm, in sunshine, on its troubled, yet harmonious way, the vast immensity of suns and systems innumerable held by the Good Hand of the Great Law moved on for ever. Yet, what point or element of truth in that series of discoveries soothed the heart in its woe, inspired the spirit in its grief, can direct the reason in its perplexity, control the man, who, as living, born, dying, suffering, needs God and immortality? Nature never did speak larger, deeper truths, but they were not the truths speaking of goodness within the soul of the universe, of conscience on the throne of law. For these you have to go to the great Christ standing at the heart of the world's history, living source of its creative moral energies. There you have to go for inspiration. That will make you good, by giving you a goodness you can love. There for eighteen centuries the world has been held as by the glittering eye of God, and the great story of the Cross has held, ruled, commanded, directed it forward in its path of service, forward in its devotion to conscience and duty and right. There, young men and maidens, go ye, and going drink, and drinking live. Life came, comes by Him alone. (Loud applause.)

Mr. R. W. DALE, M.A., who was received with applause, moved a vote of thanks to the chairman and to the rev. gentleman who had addressed the meeting. Speaking to the young men present, Mr. Dale advised them when they were listening to the flippancy kind of talk which was now so common in all parts of England, and which suggested that it was only imbecility that clung to the great traditions of the Christian faith, to remember that the noblest genius the world had seen during eighteen centuries had done homage to Christ, and that there were men like those who had addressed the present meeting, who did homage to Him still.—The Rev. W. F. CLARKSON seconded the vote, which was carried by a large majority.

The Chairman, Dr. Pulsford, and Principal Fairbairn replied, and the meeting shortly afterwards terminated.

THE CONGREGATIONAL TOTAL ABSTINENCE ASSOCIATION.

A meeting, convened by this Association, was held in Loselle's Chapel, Wheeler-street, Birmingham, on Thursday evening, Oct. 14, under the presidency of Benjamin Whitham, Esq., M.P.

The Rev. T. SHILLITO opened the proceedings with prayer.

The CHAIRMAN said: I have taken a deep interest in the cause of temperance for a long period, and when I say to you that I attended a temperance meeting upwards of fifty years ago, that is a long period in a man's life. I can remember how Utopian it then seemed to be to dream of eradicating the drinking habits of the people of this country, and I can remember when I first went to Manchester in 1832 that I did not know one single person in that great city who was a total abstainer except myself. Well, I do not think I should have the slightest difficulty in finding perhaps 20,000 or 30,000 total abstinents now in the great city of Manchester. (Applause.) It shows wonderful progress, at any rate, in that respect. But we must not shut our eyes to this fact, that we have a great task yet before us. The evil is beyond endurance. It is ruining not only the people of the country individually, but it is doing a great deal to hinder the prospects of the country commercially, socially, and religiously. I think at last the conscience of the people has got roused upon this question. Within the last five or six years I can see a wonderful change in the aspect of this question throughout the country, and that change is most unmistakably reflected in the complexion of the present House of Commons. The last House was to all intents and purposes a brewer's and a publican's Parliament. If they can call any comfort from the present House of Commons, I admire their resignation. I think the present House is bent unmistakably upon reforming the drinking habits of this country, if it is possible by legislation to accomplish that desirable object. (Hear, hear.) One most pleasant feature in the present day is the movement amongst the religious bodies. Almost every religious body in this country is now being aroused to the great importance of this movement, and I am sure no minister who has studied the question can doubt for one moment that if he can only get a thoroughly earnest temperance organisation in his church, he does a great deal to increase its usefulness and power. (Hear, hear.) The Church of England at one time was sadly behind almost every other denomination in this country, but I must say within the last four or five years they have set a noble example—(hear, hear)—and it will behove the particular denomination that I belong to, and that most of you belong to, to be up and doing. I think that you have been rather behind the other bodies in this respect, and I must say I should feel very much hurt indeed to think that such a reflection should be cast upon the Independents of this country, that they should be behind in so great and useful a work. Another and a very remarkable feature is the change amongst the doctors. I can find in the circle we move in that the doctors are all cutting off the supplies, and I can safely say I have never come across any one who has been advised by a medical man to abstain from intoxicating drinks who does not acknowledge that he is greatly benefited by the change. The effect upon the morals is good. Everybody who has studied the question will acknowledge that intemperance is the cause of more immorality, crime, and pauperism in this country than any other ten causes you could name. I believe that three-fourths of all the evils of this kind may be traced directly or indirectly to the use of spirituous liquors. We have unmistakable figures that cannot be gainsaid as to the advantages of total abstinence over what is called temperance. I happen to be a director of an insurance office where we keep the two classes separate—the total abstainers and the moderate men. We never should insure the life of an immoderate person: we never should think of taking a risk of the kind; but the result is something remarkable between these two classes—the temperate and the total abstainers. Taking the last fifteen years, according to the tables that we regulate our premiums by, amongst the total abstinents 2,002 deaths ought to have occurred, but in reality only 1,437 took place, showing a very large decrease as compared with the expected mortality. In the other section, which is a larger one, the expected deaths for the same number of years was 3,450, and, strange to say, the deaths were exactly what were estimated. This shows an enormous difference in favour of total abstinence as compared with moderation. Looking at the effect of these habits upon the industries of the country, I have often remarked that one concern with which I am connected—employing something like 5,000 people—suffers a loss (arising from the drinking habits of the workmen) amounting to £35,000 a-year. We find that we can never start the machinery on the Monday with advantage, simply from the fact that the number coming to work is so small that it is not worth our while getting up the steam; therefore, Monday is an idle day. We always find that the workmen in the beginning of the week never work anything like so well as they do at the latter end of it, simply because they are suffering from the effects of the Sunday's and Monday's drink, and often on Saturday night also. Therefore, taking this question as affecting the industry of this country, I say that you will not be able eventually to compete with the world unless you reform the drinking habits of your workmen. You may rely upon it, sober nations will eventually cut you out of the markets of the world. And when I tell you that there are 3,000,000 people relieved by the poor rates every year, and that 887,000 people are committed for crimes, the estimate of the magistrates being that fully three-fourths of the whole of that crime and pauperism may be traced to this evil, I think it behoves us as Christians and as patriots to try and remedy the evil that is causing so much mischief and misery. We know that it has its effects—and very serious effects—upon the increase of lunacy. We know, from the Revenue returns, that the quantity of drink consumed in this country,

say within the last 20 years, has greatly increased—much more rapidly, in spite of the number of teetotalers, than formerly. The effect has been that lunacy has absolutely doubled within 30 years, showing unmistakably that this great increase is affecting the people that way, as well as increasing the pauperism and crime of the country. Dr. Richardson has stated that one-third of the vitality of our 30 millions of people is destroyed by this evil. It will account at the least for 200,000 premature deaths every year. It is generally put down at a great deal less than that, but I believe that is not an exaggeration. A great deal has been said as to the disastrous harvest of last year. Well, I think it was perhaps as bad a harvest as we have had for a very long period in this country, and it caused a great deal of distress and misery. The estimate was that the deficiency amounted to 16,000,000 bushels of grain—a very large quantity to account for. But when you consider that five times that deficiency is consumed by the drink makers of this country every year, or 80,000,000 bushels, it is a mere trifles as compared with the waste caused by converting these into the poisonous drinks that are in the shape of intoxicating liquors. Surely the people will eventually see the folly of a waste such as this, because it is a waste that no country, without enormous natural advantages, could stand for any lengthened period. In the last six years the expenditure on these drinks has been £250,000,000, or considerably more than our huge National Debt. It is £150,000,000 more than all the railways of the United Kingdom cost. The first railway was made about 1830; we have been exceedingly busy ever since in making railways in this country, and yet we have not thus spent as much during that 50 years as during six years in the drink traffic of this country. We are told it is impossible to make people sober by Act of Parliament. All I can say is you make people drunk by Act of Parliament—there is no mistake about that. (Hear, hear.) Has there ever been a restrictive measure passed in this or any other country that has not had a beneficial effect in lessening the evil it was intended to remedy. Take America for example. In a great number of the States you scarcely have any drinking at all, particularly in Maine. People say you can get it. I dare say you can; but all I can say is it is an exceedingly difficult process to get it; at any rate, the consequence is the evils of intemperance are almost annihilated in that State. The consumption per head of the population is not as great in America as it is in Great Britain, showing unmistakably that the restrictive laws in that country have had a very considerable effect upon the consumption. I attribute this to a great extent to the example of the clergy. I never came across a clergyman in America who was not a total abstainer. I believe, as a rule, they are all abstainers, and I have no doubt that has had a wonderful effect upon the people of that country. The Sunday Closing Bill, as was anticipated, has been an enormous advantage to Ireland. As far as the publicans are concerned, I have met scarcely one who did not acknowledge that it has worked well, and that they are very glad it was passed, and that if they had the power to do so they would not repeal it. Wales will not be without a Sunday Closing Bill for any length of time, seeing that the people are more unanimous than they were in Ireland itself. We passed a resolution last session pledging the House of Commons to Sunday-closing for England by a majority of twenty-seven, and therefore I think that is quite within "a measurable distance" of becoming the law of the land. I have great hopes that Mr. Gladstone will carry out the promise he made, that they would bring forward a measure on the drink question, and that he will acknowledge the principle that the people should have some voice in the matter. (Hear, hear.) I have no doubt whatever that the principle of local option will be brought into the Bill, and will be adopted in some shape or other; how it will be adopted I am not at all prepared to say. I think we may not be very hopeful for the future. No question has gained ground more rapidly than the cause of temperance has done within the last four or five years. We are a slow-moving people, but when we once do move we do not often go back, and I am quite sure we shall never go back when we once become a sober and temperate nation. (Applause.)

Mr. G. B. SOWERBY, jun., referring to the Chairman's statement that their denomination was somewhat behind other denominations in this temperance work, said they did not intend it to be so any longer—they meant to make up for lost time. They, representing as they did the Congregational Total Abstinence Association, were emphatically a Total Abstinence Association, and did not believe in moderate drinking; but at the same time they could not be called by sober-minded people fanatics, or be denounced as men of one idea. Looking at the tremendous evil in their midst, it was impossible to consider it with that calmness and moderation which some people would have them do. It was a terrible social evil, the greatest source of immorality and crime; and if that was the case, then surely if they were Christian people they must strike at the root of that terrible tree of iniquity which was bringing forth so

much evil fruit. It was no use to lop off the branches—the axe must be laid at the root of the tree, and that was what they were trying to do. The object of the Association was to promote the formation of temperance societies in different parts of the country. They could evidently do little towards converting the masses to the adoption of this principle, but they hoped to set the leaven at work, and so to impress upon the minds of Christian people their duty in this matter towards God and man, that they might themselves see the importance of striving and doing their best for the overthrow of that which had proved itself to be the greatest hindrance of all Christian and philanthropic effort, and therefore the great foe of God and man. (Applause.)

Rev. T. H. HOLLOWELL said it was very pleasant to those taking part in the autumnal meeting of the Congregational Union to find that Birmingham allowed in one of its chapels so interesting and large a meeting for the advocacy of total abstinence. A man did not need to be very old to remember the time when the advocacy of temperance principles was not only not an incident in the Autumnal or May meetings of the Union, but when it would have been looked upon perhaps as an intrusion, if not a block; but he was very thankful to say that that time had passed away, and that numbers of ministers and laymen who were never present at these gatherings, and had no part in their arrangement, were yet secretly and really thankful that Congregationalists had taken their proper position in connection with the abstinence movement. The Band of Hope movement in Birmingham was a movement including a great many organisations, but he was told it was not so successful as they would wish it to be. They would all agree that if that was the case, the best thing they could do, in order to revive and consolidate it, was to make the members of all the churches more earnest in regard to total abstinence principles. He appealed to abstainers to lay themselves out for more earnest work in this direction. If a Band of Hope was to be successful, there must be some man in the work who would live and almost die for it. There was a great deal of ridicule poured upon men of one idea, but they wanted a great many more of them—persons who would do one thing, and would see that that one thing was done, whose hearts and minds were concentrated upon the accomplishment of a definite purpose in the Kingdom of God. Speaking upon the general question, he said he hoped the day would soon come when 99 out of every 100 Congregational ministers would be total abstainers, and referred to the colleges, where most of the students were already abstainers, as affording promise of very hopeful results. He congratulated the chairman on being one of a great band in the House of Commons who were determined to extend the rights of the people against the liquor traffic. Every public-house was "licensed" by the Government, and he never saw that word without a tinge of shame. Who licensed the house? The Government. The people made the Government, and as some of the people, a share of responsibility rested upon them that they could not discharge unless they did their utmost to remove this accursed traffic. In conclusion, he appealed to Christians not to support drinking customs by their example, but to give up a habit which would never do any good to themselves, but might do infinite harm to those around. (Applause.)

Rev. G. H. HINDS, of Leeds, said he was very pleased to listen to the story of the march of progress which the temperance movement had made in this land as narrated by the chairman. Only a few years ago the majority of the ministers of the Gospel quoted their Old and New Testament with profound strength against them, while the statesmen of their land had legislated against them, and had committed a Christian nation throughout to the establishment of the great drink traffic. But a change had come, and the ministers were coming largely upon their side. For the most part for some years past the young men in their colleges had been largely in favour of the temperance movement—(hear, hear)—but it was a sad thing to know that when some of them had gone forth to the churches and moved in Christian society, their total abstinence principles had been miserably broken down. That was a proof of the power of the accursed custom to destroy those principles which were really in the minds and hearts of these young ministers. The same argument pertained to the children. Whilst they were in the Band of Hope they were safe; whilst they were singing their melodies and imbibing the principles of total abstinence in their youth they were safe; but when they went forth into the world, and had to go into the battle, then the danger arose, and by the sanction of those who were higher above them in social life, and by the sanction of those who had acquired a Christian reputation, their principles might be broken down, and they might turn aside. It was time, therefore, that they as Christian men and as Christian churches should stand up manfully, and in the name of Christ demand of all men that for the sake of their brethren, for the sake of the rising generation, and for the sake of humanity, they should put their hands to this work, to the removal of this element of mis-

chief and evil which was working so much desolation and ruin in the world.

The Rev. J. S. RUSSELL, M.A., of Bayswater, wished to explain why the Congregational Total Abstinence Association had put in an appearance at the Losells Chapel in Birmingham. Their object was a very special one. They were not an association for acting upon the general public, but their object was to awaken their ministers, churches, Sunday-school teachers, and all connected with the denomination to their duty in relation to the great question of temperance in this land. He did not say they had converted as yet even the Congregational Union of England and Wales, but they were getting fast on towards that achievement. (Hear, hear.) He was happy to tell them that half at least of their ministers were total abstainers—(applause)—and three-fourths of the students training for the ministry that gave hope for the future, and although the Association did not come exactly with the endorsement of the Congregational Union, still they were to the Congregational Union of England and Wales very much what the moon was to the earth—they were its satellite; they went with it wherever it went, and, revolving round it, tried to enlighten it. (Laughter, and applause.) They had succeeded pretty well; in the seven years of their existence, they had done some good work, and had done it well. He said that, because the merit of it did not belong to himself, but to men like their noble chairman—(applause)—to men like their excellent president, Mr. Edward Baines, of Leeds—(applause)—to Mr. Samuel Morley, their noble treasurer, to Sir Charles Reed, and many others, who advocated their principles in the House of Commons. There was, however, much yet to be done, and they, as Christian people, were bound to put their hands to the plough, and never let it be said that in the great conflict for the life and honour of their country it was the Christian character that hung back, and did not come forward to the help of the Lord against the mighty. (Applause.)

A vote of thanks to the chairman brought the proceedings to a close.

DISTRICT MEETINGS.

Meetings were held on Wednesday evening in various districts of Birmingham and the neighbourhood. Sermons were preached at Highbury Chapel, by the Rev. Jackson Wray; at Smethwick, by the Rev. P. Colborne; and at Park-road Chapel, Aston, by the Rev. E. White. Mr. White, in the course of an address founded on the text Acts xxii. 22, denounced the question often put to adults and specially to children, "Are you fit to die?" contending that it should be, "Are you fit to live?" and claimed that fitness to live here was the only ground of fitness to live hereafter. There were services at Moseley, where the Revs. J. Williamson and Dr. Clemane delivered addresses, and at Lozells, where the Revs. R. W. M'All, W. Marshall, and J. Knaggs were the principal speakers. Evangelistic services were held at Edgbaston, Small Heath, Steelhouse-lane Chapel, Saltley-road Chapel, and Handsworth, in which Revs. R. Balgarnie, W. Crosbie, G. D. Macgregor, A. J. Palmer, H. Simon, S. Pearson, J. E. Flower, R. H. Love, W. Cuthbertson, and P. W. Darton took part. A public meeting held at Soho-hill, Frederick Keep, Esq., in the chair, was addressed by Rev. R. Bruce, on "The Past of the Sunday-school," and Rev. J. A. Macfadyen, on "The Future of the Sunday-school." At a Welsh meeting in the Welsh Chapel, Revs. W. Edwards, J. Ossian Davies, and Dr. Rees were the chief speakers. The Mayor of Wolverhampton presided at a meeting held in the Agricultural Hall, Wolverhampton; the Rev. G. M. Murphy spoke on the subject of "True Manhood," and the Rev. Thomas Green, replying to the question, "What is the great hope we have as a people?" urged that greater attention should be paid to the principles of political economy, if the masses of the people were to be roused from an unavailing fight against the forces of nature. At West Bromwich a working men's meeting was addressed by Revs. W. Thomas, W. Roberts, and H. Batchelor. At Leamington, Rev. J. G. Rogers delivered a lecture in Spencer-street Chapel, on "The Rationalist's Christ, a review of Renan." At Walsall, Revs. R. Bulmer and G. S. Reaney took part in an evangelistic meeting. At Nuneaton, on Monday, the two churches, Bond End and Old Chapel, held a united tea-meeting in Bond-end Chapel, followed by a public meeting, at which addresses were delivered by Revs. H. T. Robjohns and T. G. Horton. At Wolverhampton, on Thursday, Rev. G. Martin preached to the young in Snowhill Chapel, and a public meeting, presided over by Rev. D. Jones Hamer, took place in Queen's-street Chapel, and was addressed by Revs. W. Hope Davison, J. Ervine, and J. Legge. On the same evening there was an evangelistic meeting at Walsall, at which Revs. R. Hobson and T. Sissons delivered addresses.

REV. JOSEPH COOK.—The Rev. Joseph Cook, of Boston, Massachusetts, preached last Sunday in Carr's-lane Chapel, Birmingham (Mr. R. W. Dale's), to crowded congregations, large numbers of persons thronging

the place before the commencement of the services. In the morning he preached on "Prayer," and in the evening on "The Decay of Rationalism in Germany." The characteristic boldness and vigour of Mr. Cook produced a great impression.

RELIGIOUS EQUALITY MOVEMENT.

MR. CARVELL WILLIAMS AT SCARBOROUGH.

THE Scarborough Liberal Association have commenced their winter's work by inviting Mr. Carvell Williams to deliver an address on "The Religious Equality Movement: its Recent Successes and its Present Prospects," which was given in the Old Town-hall on Friday evening last. There was a large audience on the occasion, and Mr. Caine, M.P., one of the members for the borough, presided.

The CHAIRMAN, in opening the proceedings, said that it was the belief of the Liberal Association that it was essential that the work of political education should be carried on without intermission, and he announced the subjects of a series of lectures to be delivered during the winter. That to which the audience was about to listen would be given by one who was a thorough master of his subject, and who had rendered service of the utmost value in connection with the Parliamentary advocacy of religious equality, it being his business to keep the Liberal members right on ecclesiastical questions. After contrasting the conduct of the late and of the present Government in dealing with the Burials Question, he introduced

Mr. CARVELL WILLIAMS, who was received with much applause. Referring to the early days of this movement, with which he had so long been connected, he said that it was certain he should not then have had the opportunity of addressing such an audience, and still more certain that he would not have been asked by the Scarborough Liberal Association to deliver the first of a course of lectures. (Cheers and laughter.) Referring to events which were beginning to fade in the public recollection, he sketched the history of the Church-Rate Abolition movement, and described Mr. Gladstone's mode of dealing with the question in 1868, and the practical results of the settlement then effected—asking if there were any Churchmen who would now wish to revive the system which many of them tried to perpetuate? The agitation for the abolition of ecclesiastical tests in the Universities and in other educational institutions, had made great progress, and had been followed by substantial results; but clerical restrictions in connection with headships and fellowships had yet to be abolished, and other reforms had to be effected before all the educational endowments belonging to the nation were made available for the whole community, without regard to sectarian distinctions. (Hear, hear.) Briefly referring to the measures which had been passed for the registration of births, marriages, and deaths, and the admission of Jews to Parliament, and the abolition of offensive oaths and declarations, the speaker said that, while some of these changes had been strenuously opposed, they had all worked so well that no one wished for a return to what had been abolished. Lord Palmerston, in one of the debates on the Reform Bill of 1831, said that "most of the measures which impartial posterity stamps with the mint-mark of purest wisdom and most unalloyed good are wrung from the reluctant consent of England only after long and toilsome years of political discussion," and that had been emphatically true in the case of many of the measures which the advocates of religious equality had succeeded in passing into law. (Cheers.) The abolition of the Irish Church Establishment was an event of first-rate importance, not only because it put an end to a great injustice, but because it showed that the disestablishment of a Church was comparatively easy, as well as possible; while it also showed, whatever "Church defenders" might say to the contrary, that statesmen regarded what was called Church property as national property, which might be dealt with by Parliament for the good of the whole nation. (Cheers.) Sir George Grey had, so lately as 1865, declared that it was the firm belief of the Government that the Irish Church would not be subverted without revolution, with all the horrors that attend revolutions; but the prediction had been completely falsified by the event. (Cheers.) To the question whether disestablishment had pacified Ireland, he replied that it would require not one measure, but many, to remove existing discontent in a country where the results of the misgovernment of centuries were still being felt. "The fathers had eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth were set on edge," and time and patience and courage would all be needed to make Ireland peaceful and prosperous. It should be borne in mind that most of the discontent now existing in that country had reference to but one question—that of the land, and that it was largely local in character; while there was ample evidence that the policy of religious equality which had been adopted in Ireland had had a healing influence (Cheers.) Whatever doubt might exist on

other points, it was equally clear that the Irish Church had not been injured in the crisis through which it had passed. When the Irish Church Bill was before the House of Lords, the Archbishop of Armagh solemnly declared that disendowment in Ireland meant nothing short of the extinction of Protestantism in Ireland; but what had the Primate of Ireland told the General Synod of the Irish Episcopal Church? The task before them ten years ago, he said, was one of great delicacy, as well as of great difficulty; it affected the whole fabric of their ecclesiastical policy, and there were great dangers to be encountered on every side; but, he added, "we now look back upon the past with complacency, and to the future with confidence—confident that what is still wanting will be in time supplied, and that the zeal, and energy, and wisdom, that have hitherto helped us will not fail to aid us in the days that are yet to come." (Cheers.) After that decisive testimony, surely nothing more could be said about injury inflicted on the Irish Church by Disestablishment, and if Irish Episcopalians could overcome such difficulties English Episcopalians might pluck up courage to face danger which would scarcely be greater. (Hear, hear.) Coming down to more recent events, the speaker said that the Liberal party had lately passed through a dreary period, and also a great crisis; but while it had been a time of inaction, or reaction in Parliament, it had been a time of activity and progress on the part of Liberationists in the country. They had, in fact, resolved to do much out of Parliament because they could do but little in Parliament; and at the recent general election they had found their reward. (Cheers.) It was true that the election did not turn upon Disestablishment, because the supreme object before the Liberal party was to get rid of a bad and dangerous Government; but it was found in almost all directions that Liberationist candidates proved to be the most successful Liberal candidates, and Mr. Gladstone's was not only the Liberal mind on which the recent political action of Nonconformists had made a profound and enduring impression. (Cheers.) After referring to the number of disestablishment candidates elected—including Mr. Caine, one of the representatives of Scarborough—and to the elections in Scotland and in Wales, Mr. Williams said that he had been struck with the quality, as well as with the number, of their friends who had been returned, and who gave promise of rendering valuable service to their cause. The late Session would be a memorable one in Parliamentary annals, for the energy and the persistency displayed by both the Government and the House of Commons. If he could not speak with enthusiasm of the new Burials Act, he recognised its importance as establishing a principle which would prove to be far-reaching in its results. He believed that the Government might have passed a less timid and restricted measure, because the Tory leaders were thoroughly sick of the question, which they found to be a most embarrassing one, both in Parliament and at elections. (Hear, hear.) He had understood that, when the late Government abandoned the Burials Bill in 1877, the Cabinet were divided in opinion on the question, and that had been confirmed by a recent disclosure of the Archbishop of York, who said that after Lord Harrowby's clause had been carried, there was an agreement come to between the two archbishops, Lord Harrowby, and Lord Beaconsfield that the Nonconformist claim should be conceded. The Archbishop says he is quite unable to reconcile this with Lord Beaconsfield's recent declaration that he abandoned his opposition to the Burials Bill of this Session only because the members of the episcopal bench were divided; but there were a great many other things in his lordship's career which it was equally impossible to reconcile; but he, at least, knew when he was beaten. (Laughter.) The extent to which the new Act had already been put in operation must have surprised those who had persistently asserted that the grievance with which it dealt was an imaginary, and not a real, one; and, although it was too early to speak with confidence of the way in which the Act would operate, there had, thus far, been nothing to give countenance to the dismal predictions of the opponents of the Bill. He had made a choice collection of the wild utterances and the bigoted threats of some of the clergy in relation to the measure; but he would spare the meeting, and spare the clergy, too, by not repeating them. He was content to regard the declarations of some of the bishops as a set-off against those of some of the clergy, believing that the clerical fanatics were in a decided minority. (Hear, hear.) The Act would, he believed, prove to be a beneficent and healing measure, and presently it would be wondered that anybody should have opposed it. (Loud cheers.) In conclusion, the speaker expressed great satisfaction at the determination of the Scarborough Liberal Association to continue the work of political education. It was essential to the existence and the power of the party, and it was even more essential for the success of the Liberal wing of the party. They had much to do in England and in Scotland—and the speaker described some of the work—before religious equality would be enjoyed throughout the realm, and when it came it

would prove to be an era of contentment, of union, and of peace. (Loud cheers.)

Mr. WHITTAKER, the well-known temperance advocate, moved a vote of thanks to Mr. Williams for his instructive and eloquent address, and indulged in some interesting reminiscences of John Thorogood and John Childs, whom he had well known.

The motion having been seconded, heartily carried, and acknowledged, a vote of thanks to the Chairman closed the proceedings.

CONFERENCE IN EDINBURGH.

The annual conference of the Scottish Council of the Liberation Society was held on Tuesday at Edinburgh, and was largely attended by representative men from various parts of the country. Mr. Dick Peggie, M.P., Mr. Grant, M.P., Mr. Richard, M.P., Mr. Carvell Williams, and Dr. Hutton were the principal speakers. It was strongly urged that a motion to abolish the Scotch Establishment should be submitted to Parliament, and it was also agreed that there should be no delay in issuing the scheme of Disestablishment which has for some time been in preparation. A good deal of prominence was given to the Church and Manse rate question. Great satisfaction was expressed at the result of the General Election, particularly in Scotland. In the evening a public meeting was held in the new hall of the United Presbyterian Church, and there was a large attendance and great heartiness. Mr. McLaren, M.P., presided, and besides the English delegation, Professor Cairns and Mr. Taylor Innes spoke.

OTHER MEETINGS.

North Elmham, near Dereham.—On Thursday evening Mr. Lummis lectured here on "The Present Position and Prospects of the Disestablishment Question." Mr. Brookes presided. This being the first meeting, much of ignorant opposition had to be met, but the lecturer was cordially asked to go again.

Cromer.—Mr. Lummis had a full meeting here on Friday night, chiefly composed of agriculturists. Mr. Dennis presided. Some discussion. At each of these meetings a tone of confidence and courage, greatly differing from the spirit of last season's campaign, was manifested. We must now advance and strike the blow.

Yaxley, Hunts.—A lecture on "Disestablishment from several points of view" was delivered here on Tuesday evening by Mr. Lummis. The attendance, owing to local causes, was not large, but the attention was most sustained and earnest.

Stilton, Hunts.—The next evening Mr. Lummis was here, and had a full, meeting and capital attention. Mr. Davis presided.

THE REV. STOPFORD A. BROOKE ON HIS SECESSION.

ON Sunday morning Bedford Chapel, Bloomsbury, was crowded on the occasion of the Rev. Stopford A. Brooke's first sermon since his announcement of secession from the Church of England. The service was conducted with certain alterations which were thus set forth in a printed paper:

The changes and omissions made in the morning and evening service are of two kinds; one in order to shorten the service, the other in order to free it from doctrinal forms to which I can no longer assent. 1. I have shortened the service by omitting a portion of the opening address and the absolution, by throwing into one prayer the two prayers for the Queen and the Royal Family, and by replacing the Ten Commandments by the summary of them given by Jesus Christ in these words: "The Lord our God is one Lord. Thou shall love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul, and with all thy might, and with all thy strength; and thou shall love thy neighbour as thyself." Answer: Lord have mercy upon us, and write all this Thy law in our hearts, we beseech Thee. 2. In the place of the Gloria Patri, I shall end the Psalms and Canticles with "Amen." 3. In the place of the Te Deum there will be sung one of the following Psalms: On the first, third, and fifth Sundays in the month (except on the fourth day of the month), Psalm XIX.; or, on the second and fourth Sundays in the month, Psalm CXLV. 4. The Apostles' Creed and the Nicene Creed will be left out, and immediately after the "Let us pray," which follows the Apostles' Creed, the Lord's Prayer will be read. 5. All the prayers will be closed with the words, "Through Jesus Christ our Lord." To this it was added that the changes in the service of the Holy Communion would be hereafter notified, and that the present hymn-book would be used until Mr. Brooke should have issued another.

Mr. Brooke took for his text, Mark ix., 50, "Salt is good; but if the salt lose its saltiness, wherewith will ye season it?" He said that since he last met his congregation he had taken a step which changed many things, both for those who had listened to him for so long and for himself. He had left the Church of England, and that chapel had entered on a new life. It was with mingled seriousness and joy that he had taken this step. Indeed, there could be few hours more grave in a man's life than that in which, late in his career and no longer young, he left the home that had sheltered him for so many years, with all its associations and traditions, and set sail, an emigrant, for a new land. He asked them to believe that he had not rashly done this thing, that he had counted the cost of it, and that he meant with God's help to work it out. He was bound not to make such a change unless he clearly knew, in matters of religious thinking, all of religious life,

where he was and what he meant, and unless he stated with all the clearness he could muster why he had changed his place, and what he thought of those great religious truths to which he clung with all his heart and soul and intellect. It would be necessary for some Sundays that he should speak of those truths in order that his congregation should know whether to leave or stay with him. He had stated that the main reason for his departure from the Church was that he had ceased to believe the miracle of the incarnation, and that since the English Church rested its whole scheme of doctrine on that miracle, a disbelief of the miracle put him outside the Church. But he also left the Church because he had come to disapprove of the very existence of it as an ecclesiastical body, especially as connected with the State. Politically the theory of the Church was mixed up with the old aristocratic system, which had perished, or was perishing so rapidly, the very reasons for which were in opposition, as he thought, to all the moving and living forces of society. The theory of the Church was an aristocratic theory, and it ministered to that imperialistic conception of God, which in theology had done as much harm as despotism or caste systems of any kind had done to society. The Church had systematised exclusion and supported caste in religion. It had forced the whole body of Dissenters from its forums to suffer under a religious and social stigma now scarcely beginning to be removed. The standard of worthiness, in the theory of the Church, was not spiritual goodness but union with itself. This was not the fault of its members, but the fault of the theory; and it was the fullest condemnation of that theory. Many within the Church had tried to do what was right, to hold out the hand of union to Nonconformists; but every effort had failed and would fail—the theory of the Church was too strong for those men. Secondly, the Church claimed authority over the faith of men by creeds which crystallised past religion. It asked men practically to surrender a good part of their individuality. The inevitable tendency of this was to make preacher and hearer the conventional servants, not of a living world, but of a literal system—bones in a skeleton, not members of a living body. But the powers which it was the tendency of authority to weaken—reason, conscience, and spiritual imagination—were the only powers God had given us whereby we could see His truth, recognise His word, and grasp His new treasures of revelation. Though there were numbers in the Church who claimed their liberty and retained their freedom, the tendency in the end was too much for them, or their position became untenable. They could not wholly liberalise a Church based on authority, and to take away authority, as some wished to do, would not liberalise the Church, but would do away with it altogether. The Church was nothing without its system, and its system was authoritative. With regard to the greatest of all religious conceptions—the idea of a universal Church—the theory of the Church of England was not only inadequate but contradictory. That theory excluded from the Church's fold all who did not confess its creeds or acknowledge the Bible as infallible. The Church was not alone in this; almost all the sects had their exclusive confessions, and many were more exclusive than the Church itself. This exclusiveness seemed to him to be at the root of nearly half the evils which had connected themselves with religion. In the past it made intolerance and persecution a Christian duty; in the present it was the source of daily violation of Christian love. It depressed and stifled the mighty conceptions which Christ gave the Church—of a universal Fatherhood of God, and a universal brotherhood among men. He could, therefore, neither stay in the Church nor join a sect. He found no rest for his feet among any of the parties in the Church, and least of all among the Liberal Church party. The position of that party was tenable upon the ground that the law, which only took notice of agreement of words, was the judge of theology, and it was also tenable as long as the public understood and recognised that position. But when the theory of that party should be pushed too far, or should come into contact with vital and pressing questions, it was certain to break down. The time had come when compromise was incomprehensible. It had done its work in expanding the Church and modifying its tests, in making the whole tone of the Church more tolerant, while the power of the Church as a religious body had justly and nobly increased. But even an elastic body could not be stretched beyond a certain point, and if it should come to be said—and there were some symptoms of such a thing—that the liberal party in the Church might say anything they pleased, might deny the miraculousness, the divinity, not to say the Godhead of Christ, might abandon the incarnation and the resurrection, might deny the authority of the Church and the Bible, and yet cling to the Church, then the strain would be too great for themselves in their congregations for the endurance of the Church, and he believed, for the sympathy of the laity. It would be better then for the religious life of the nation that such persons should acknowledge that compromise had reached its limits and should revert to the position occupied a few years ago by the liberal clergy, or choose a position outside the Church. He was, moreover, convinced that the whole of religion was suffering from this state of compromise—not those already religious, but the chances of religion on the great mass. The High Church and the Low Church did not compromise at all, but the liberal party compromised the matter by putting aside the question—speaking of Christianity as a beautiful moral system, not really founded on miracles or on dogmas, but the life and religion of the heart. This was a clear position but he thought it might be carried too far for the advantage of religious life in this nation. To say nothing about miracles, when the question was leaping into the mind of everyone, to say that Christianity did not rest on them, was to act as it was said the ostrich acted. The vast change which science had made in our views of history and the world was too much in the minds and brains of men for compromise, and men who believed in Christianity as the saving power for the race, and yet did not see how they could without self-inflicted blindness deny that the results of science and criticism had changed all religious questions, had no business to pass by these questions in order that they might by their inaction widen the Church. The very life of religion was endangered in the mass of the people, and it was no time to think only of side issues. It was on this account that he resolved to give up that course of action and try another. He could not, therefore, holding his opinions, remain in the Church and hope to do any good; everybody would accuse him of dishonesty. He should now be able to declare that while he frankly accepted the proved conclusions of science and criticism, there remained untouched and clear the great spiritual truths of the soul, the eternal revelation of God, the deep life of Christianity. He was free, and he was heartily glad of it. He had made no sacrifice; he had followed with joy and gladness his own convictions; and he looked forward with ardour and devotion to preaching the great truths that declared the definite revelation of God to man. He should speak of God abiding in nature and abiding in man, of God imminent in history and filling and impelling day by day the race of man, of the revelation he was daily giving of Himself to man, and of the inspiration He poured into us all, of God as revealed in the beat way by Jesus Christ, of the true life of man which He had disclosed in His life, of the power and love by which God through Him kindled and supported that life of man, of God incarnate in all men in the same manner, though not in the same degree as in Christ, of the vast spiritual communion in which all men were contained, of the hopes of immortality in which they now lived and the fulfilment of which was their destiny, of the personal life of God in the soul, and of His universal love, and of the thousand effects which in human history and life followed in practice from the vivid acceptance of these mighty truths. Could he, then, be sorrowful or look back with anything of regret? Perfect freedom in these truths ought to kindle and inspire. He asked his congregation to pray that he might always keep their ardour with him, that in humility he might strive to be worthy of them and to teach them; that the Father of light and life might be with him; and that humbly and faithfully he might follow the steps of God his Father, in the footsteps of his Master, Christ.

THE MERCHANTS' LECTURE.

MR. WHITE'S third Merchants' Lecture, which was delivered on Tuesday morning at the Weigh House Chapel, dealt mainly with the character of the assertions made by the apostles, and more especially by St. Paul. Those assertions, he pointed out, amounted to nothing less than a claim to absolute knowledge of the mind of God. The apostles all agreed in solemnly declaring that they spoke with Divine authority. There was nothing, however, in the books of the New Testament which implied that they could only be interpreted by ecclesiastical authority. The language of the apostles could, argued Mr. White, be only understood upon the supposition that they really wrote under Divine inspiration, and that their writings were intelligible to ordinary readers. Neither learning nor ecclesiastical position was recognised by Christ and His apostles as constituting authority to which unquestioning obedience should be rendered. Thus the arrogant pretensions of the literary and scientific hierarchy, as well as those of the Church of Rome, found no countenance in the New Testament. In conclusion, the lecturer showed that any errors in the transcription or translation of the books of Scripture no more weakened their general authority than did an error in the nautical almanac destroy confidence in the astronomical science of Greenwich.

Messrs. Mitchell and Hughes are now issuing Vol. XIII. of the "Kent Archaeological Society," edited by the Rev. Canon Scott Robertson, the honorary secretary. It is a large volume of 632 pp., illustrated by a large chromo-lithograph and various engravings of great merit, illustrating the crypt of Canterbury Cathedral &c.

THE REFORMED CHURCH OF FRANCE.
LETTER FROM DR. PRESSENE.

I SHALL direct the attention of your readers to-day to the internal affairs of French Protestantism. It is impossible to hide from ourselves the gravity of the present position. A very brief summary of the antecedents will explain it.

The Council of State is in France the final court of appeal for all complaints against the acts of the Administration. Last July this Council gave its decision on the application of several Consistories belonging to the Rationalist party, who objected to the Ministerial ratification of the electoral conditions imposed by a vote of the Synod in 1872. This resolution required from the electors a declaration of their acceptance of the revelation contained in Holy Scripture. It thus altered the electoral conditions sanctioned by the Government in the month of March, 1852, by which a vote was allowed to all Protestants by birth, subject to certain purely external conditions, such as their having kept their first Communion in the Reformed Church. There was no definition whatever of creed as a qualification. The Synod of 1872, in its sincere desire to re-establish the Reformed Church upon the basis of evangelical beliefs, demanded of the electors some pledge of their faith, justly considering that in a Church in which all authority is elective, the composition of the electoral body is of the utmost importance. The Minister of Public Worship who was in power immediately after the Synod of 1872, gave legal sanction to its decision. The elections made by some Liberal Consistories which resisted the Synodal vote, were thus rendered null and void. Against this they appealed to the Council of State, and the decision has only recently been given, though the cause has been pending for several years. This delay has secured the victory for the anti-synodal party; for a complete change has come over the political world of France in the interim. Clerical ministers like MM. Batbie and de Cumont have been succeeded by ministers who are not only Republicans but Freethinkers. The Council of State of 1872, chosen by the Monarchical and Ultra-montane majority of the National Assembly, has been succeeded by one of quite another character. This political body reversed in July last the Ministerial decision cancelling the elections of the Consistories which had refused to submit to the Synodal vote. It is true that there was a technical pretext for the step thus taken. A Ministerial decree only acquires the force of law when it has received the sanction of the Council of State; and this the minister who ratified the Synodal vote had failed to seek. The whole question might, indeed, have been re-opened, but considering the disposition of the present Council of State, this would have been utterly useless. Moreover, the question has been summarily decided in principle by a Ministerial circular, which removes all religious conditions, properly speaking, from the electorate, and convokes the Protestant electors for next March upon the purely civil basis of 1852. Thus the last relic of the work of the Synod of 1872 is destroyed. Abundant evidence had already been given of the futility of its most important article—that which makes it obligatory on the candidates for the ministry to adhere to the profession of the fundamental articles of the Christian faith. There is now, therefore, an electoral body absolutely without any religious qualifications, and the Church is thrown open indiscriminately to all sorts of doctrine.

At the same time the Minister of Public Worship has submitted to the Consistory of Paris (in which there is still an Evangelical majority) a scheme which would split it up into several sections, in order that the minority might have satisfaction on the points on which it is agreed. The Minister made the mistake of prefacing his decision as to the electorate, with theoretical considerations intended to show the advantage to Protestantism of being open to embrace all shades of opinion. In this he went altogether beyond his province, which gives him no right whatever to pronounce upon questions of this order. Apart from this technical mistake, however, I cannot but feel that he was right. The civil power which grants subsidies to a church, cannot show favour to any one section of it without compromising its strictly lay and neutral character. That which is possible is that these various sections should form separate bodies, and as such seek to be separately dealt with by the State. This system has been consistently advocated by one sect on of the Evangelicals who desired an equitable division. The majority of the orthodox party objected to the proposal as tending to schism. It is suffering to-day the legitimate consequences of this refusal. The State being incompetent to enter into doctrinal differences, extends an equal protection to all Protestants by birth, who all share alike in the payment of taxes. This latitudinarianism is the logical consequence of a national religion. The history of French Protestantism since 1872 shows emphatically how impossible it is for a church to determine its evangelical basis while it is united to the State. It is vain for orthodox circles to raise their voices in protest. The State is in the right, and is simply doing its duty. It is impossible to combine all advantages—

to be independent, and at the same time to receive the support of the State; to be an evangelical and yet an established Church.

Surely the moment is ill chosen by Christians of the Reformed establishment, for lauding their system, and pouring scorn upon the school of Vinet. This great promoter of the independence of the Church is just now, the object of a strong reactionary tide of feeling, and his ideas are ridiculed as purely chimerical.

His best vindication is to be found in the lamentable condition of all the national churches of Europe. I refer only to their ecclesiastical position, for I would be the first to recognise the treasures of love and faith which they contain. But so far as their organisation is concerned, I am ready to take up the words of Pascal, and, applying them in this sense, exclaim: "Mournful condition of the Church when it no longer depends on God alone!"

E. DE PRESSENE.

Paris, Oct. 15, 1880.

THE REV. A. E. HARBOURN.

FINSBURY CHAPEL on Tuesday evening looked not a little gay, as up in the gallery and down in the spacious area a tea was held, and ursa and flowers and happy faces were to be seen on every side. The new pastor, the Rev. A. E. Harbourn, was to be recognised, and hence the gathering which had come to do him honour. Tea over, the flowers were gathered up on to the platform, while behind there was a strong force of ministers from far and near, who had to rejoice with the Finsbury congregation over a settlement apparently so much to the satisfaction of all and so full of promise. Already Mr. Harbourn has had a fair experience of ministerial work, and he comes to Finsbury Chapel no novice, but, as it were, in the very flower of life. The meeting in the evening was still more numerously attended than the tea, and was presided over by the Rev. Dr. Parker, who, after prayer by the Rev. E. Price, called upon Mr. Plumbe to make a statement as to the circumstances which had led to Mr. Harbourn's settlement, after Dr. McAuslane's ministry of 18 years had terminated somewhat suddenly. Mr. Harbourn, said Mr. Plumbe, had come to them in consequence of an almost unanimous vote, and it was their belief that it was the finger of God which had directed him there, where he commenced his labours on the 16th of August. Mr. Green, who had been a worker in Finsbury Chapel Sunday-school for 45 years, as representing that important institution, then gave Mr. Harbourn a cordial greeting. Mr. W. Taylor, one of the oldest members of the church followed and, amidst repeated cheers, testified to the full and able character of Dr. McAuslane's preaching, regretting that he was not there to greet their new pastor—whom he heartily welcomed as the right man in the right place, an expression which was received with repeated applause. The next speaker was a gentleman deputed to bear the fraternal wishes of the church at Rotherhithe, which had greatly flourished under Mr. Harbourn's ministrations, both as regards attendance and church membership. Mr. Harbourn, who was enthusiastically received, said that meeting was a house-warming. They had been a little shy at first, but now they were happily married. He was also greatly encouraged by having Dr. Parker on the platform, and by his knowledge of the history of the church. Then Mr. Plumbe next read a letter from Dr. Clemence, which was a fitting testimony to Mr. Harbourn's qualifications for the Finsbury Chapel pulpit. And after another hymn had been sung, Dr. Parker said, as the senior Congregational minister in the City of London he gave Mr. Harbourn the right hand of fellowship. Finsbury had a noble history, and he should not have thought so well of Mr. Harbourn as he did if he had ignored it. He was not, however, to be overshadowed by the memory of his predecessors. Every man must be himself, and people were not to contrast their minister, or compare him with others. Mr. Harbourn must be faithful to his own individuality, and if he was that, in due time he would reap his reward. Dr. Parker then spoke of ministers who read their sermons, of those who wrote them and then delivered them as if extemporaneous, and argued that however a minister preached, whether he preached extemporaneously, or read his sermon, there would be people in the pews who felt that they could do much better, to whom he would say, Let them try. However, if each preacher followed his own particular forte, he need not fear the critics, who were said to be the men who had failed. He denied that there was any particular kind of preaching which would infallibly fill a chapel and get the working classes to come. Nor was it true that earnestness did everything. They knew that at times the Master Himself had seasons of discouragement, and so had all the preachers of the past. Dr. Parker then congratulated the people on the grand scene before them. They had begun on a high platform, and it would require all their united energy to keep it up. As Mr. Harbourn had referred to the collection which was to be made for chapel expenses, he (Dr. Parker) concluded with the hope that they would all give liberally, and that it would be the largest collection they had ever had. The meeting was then addressed by the Rev. G. Garlick, who had met Mr. Harbourn in the Midland Counties—where he had just renounced a profession in which he had every prospect of success for conscience sake, and had been the means of inducing him to study for the ministry—the Rev. P. J. Turquand, the Rev. J. Perkins, and others, the interest created by the proceedings being sustained to the end.

In a preface to a new edition of his memoirs, published in Paris, Kossuth vehemently attacks the relations between Austria and Hungary. He declares that the Hungarian Question, like the Eastern, is a European one. These protestations have caused some sensation in Hungary.

THE EVANGELICAL ALLIANCE.

THIS body, after a lapse of twenty years, is again meeting at Nottingham. The first gathering was held on Tuesday evening, in the Albert Hall, when the Rev. G. Edgecomb, rector of St. Peter's, delivered an address of welcome on behalf of the Nottingham committee. He was glad, he said, to be a member of the Alliance, for it had done more, he believed, to inculcate real Church principles and to promote brotherly love than any organisation with which he was acquainted. It was something in a time like this, when party spirit was rife, to belong to a society which laid down the regulation that its members should, in their conduct and in the use of the Press, endeavour to put away all bitterness of spirit and language. He rejoiced that they had come to know that no Church had a monopoly of blessing, and that they believed that those who feared God and worked righteousness were accepted of Him. By no one at the recent Church Congress were their principles more eloquently expounded than by the good Bishop of Liverpool. The address of the Bishop of Peterborough ought to be written in letters of gold. Mr. John Finch, the treasurer, having responded on behalf of the visitors, thanking Nottingham friends for all the admirable arrangements they had made, the Rev. Principal Brown, of Aberdeen, spoke on behalf of the Scottish friends of the Alliance, remarking that the very cordial address of the Rector of St. Peter's must have given pleasure to all the visitors. The meeting was also addressed by the Revs. S. Hall and A. Constantine, Pastor Wagner, and Colonel Brooke. During the evening a fraternal greeting was sent by telegraph to the Irish branch of the Alliance, which was assembled at the same hour in Belfast, and a friendly message was received in return before the meeting was over.

Mr. Trevelyan's "Early History of Charles James Fox" was published by Messrs. Longman. We shall refer to the work at some length in a few days.

THE UNITED KINGDOM ALLIANCE.—The friends of the Alliance held their annual gathering in Manchester on Tuesday, under prospects which were considered most gratifying. Sir W. Lawson, who presided at the General Council, said they met under more favourable circumstances than ever. They had now 248 pledged supporters in the House of Commons, and they must put pressure on the House to carry out their policy. With the voters at his back he would be more than a match for all the brewers and licensed wine-sellers in the kingdom. It was impossible that the carrying out of the policy of the Alliance could be delayed much longer. The statement that nothing short of a direct popular vote on the issue and renewal of licences would satisfy the Alliance was received with immense cheering. The report was adopted, and a resolution was carried thanking Sir Wilfrid and those who supported the Local Option motion, and expressing satisfaction at Mr. Gladstone's promise with regard to licensing reform. In the evening the Free Trade Hall was crowded to overflowing with a most enthusiastic audience. The Bishop of Manchester presided, and remarked that he thought the time had come when there must be some mitigation of the detestable drink traffic. The speakers included Sir Wilfrid Lawson, Canon Farrar, Mr. Hugh Mason, M.P., Mr. Caine, M.P., Mr. Arthur Pease, M.P., and Mr. Whitworth, M.P.

Dr. PARKER makes the following explanation of his recent letter to the *Times*:—"Some persons who are unacquainted with my ministry have entirely misconceived the meaning of my letter. That letter was written on the assumption that my personal theological position was so well known as not to require formal statement in your columns; and my intention was that the letter should be perused in the light of that position. If I had modified my faith as an evangelical teacher of the most pronounced type, the letter would have been absolutely without point or significance. Whatever force the letter has is entirely due to the fact that it was written by one who strongly holds the position of an evangelical teacher. From a man in any other position it would have had no distinctiveness of meaning. One of the religious questions of the day is how to find out points of agreement rather than to magnify points of difference, and to that hopeful inquiry I ventured to make a suggestion. That suggestion may have been wise or unwise, but, at all events, it was offered in good faith, and under the influence of a deep conviction that evangelical religion is much broader in its sympathies and aspirations than it is sometimes supposed to be."

WHOLE MEAL BREAD.—The Bread Reform League commenced their campaign very successfully on Saturday, by means of a lecture delivered in Kensington Town Hall by Miss Yates, honorary secretary of the new organisation. Dr. B. W. Richardson presided. Miss Yates remarked that bread made from ground wheat, with nothing removed, except, perhaps, the tough silicated outer skin, furnished every constituent necessary for healthful human existence, as proved by the Spartans and Romans, who lived pretty nearly exclusively on whole meal wheaten bread. One shilling's worth of wheat meal bread, which will form a substantial meal for nine people, contained 40 per cent. more nourishment than white bread, three times more flesh-forming material, seventy times more heat-producing material, and three times more bone-forming material, than one shilling's worth of beef. Well-to-do people, perhaps, supplied by other articles of food the valuable constituents that were rejected in the preparation of white bread, though it was doubtful whether the most skilfully devised dietary could furnish all the constituents needed for the human body in the same equitably adjusted proportion that they were provided by Nature in a grain of wheat. In the case of the poor, this substitution was out of the question, and, as a consequence, they suffered from defective nutrition, and paid the penalties that inevitably followed every violation of Nature's laws. Miss Yates explained that whole meal bread was very different from what was called brown bread.

News of the Free Churches.

CONGREGATIONAL.

—The Rev. J. E. Moore, of Worksop, has accepted a call to the church at Kirkby Stephen.

—Rev. F. M. Eastman (late of Northampton) has accepted the pastorate of the Congregational Church at Long Melford, Suffolk.

—Rev. E. Reeves Palmer, M.A., late of Union Chapel, Shanghai, has accepted the pastorate of the church at King's Lynn.

—Rev. Robert Jackson, late of Sutton-in-Ashfield, has accepted the invitation of the church at Cockerham to become their pastor for six months.

—Rev. J. Mountain and Mrs. Mountain have just concluded a fortnight of successful mission services at Jarrold-on-Tyne. The meetings were well attended, and were characterised by deep solemnity.

—Rev. R. Willan, of Newport, Isle of Wight, has accepted a unanimous invitation to return to his first charge at Birstal, Leeds, which he left 24 years ago, and where he is to begin his ministerial work again early in November.

—Rev. W. H. Hill, pastor of the church at Faversham, was presented on Thursday last, on the occasion of his fifteenth anniversary, with a case containing 100 guineas and an illuminated book containing the names of the subscribers.

—The Rev. J. De Kewer Williams and the Old Gravel Pit Dorcas Society met on Thursday last at Percy Lodge, Snaresbrook, to present a timepiece to their retiring secretary, Mrs. Newbury, who organised it and has rendered it various and valuable services.

—Mr. R. T. Booth, from America, delivered a lecture on Total Abstinence at Notting-dale Chapel, Notting-hill, on the 14th inst. The chair was occupied by the Rev. H. Dewey, the pastor, who heartily welcomed Mr. Booth. Thirty persons signed the pledge at the close of the meeting.

—The anniversary services of Briton-street Congregational Church, Briton Ferry (Rev. S. C. Pinch, pastor), was held on Sunday and Monday. Sermons were preached in English by Revs. M. H. Le Pla, of Llanelli, and G. Hawker, Newth, and in Welsh by the Rev. R. Rees of Aberavon. Large congregations attended. The sum of £45 was collected.

—The anniversary sermons of the church at Chelstow were preached last Sunday by the Rev. G. F. Newman, who also gave some account in the afternoon of "Religious Life on the Continent of Europe." On Monday there was a tea-meeting in the schoolroom, after which Mr. Newman gave a lecture in the chapel on "Reminiscences and Incidents of Foreign Travel." The collections were good, and the congregations large.

—The first anniversary of the Rev. W. Paterson's pastorate of Adelphi Chapel, Hackney-road, London, was celebrated on Sunday, October 10. Mr. Paterson preached in the morning, Dr. McAuslane in the afternoon, and the Rev. T. Sissons (Woolwich) in the evening. On the 14th a most successful tea-meeting was held in the schoolroom, after which a large public meeting took place in the chapel. Alex. Kerr, Esq., occupied the chair. Addresses were delivered by the chairman, Revs. J. Bennett, F. Tarres, A. A. Griffith, LL.B., S. Todd, W. Tyler, and W. Paterson. Collections, together with several donations, amounted to £50 17s. 6d.

—The church at Hopton, Mirfield, is one of the oldest in the country, having been founded by Mr. Richard Thorp, of Hopton Hall, in 1632. The old meeting-house was erected in 1733 at a cost of £115, Dr. Isaac Watts being one of the subscribers. The present church was built in 1829, and opened free from debt, no collections being made at the opening services. One of the principal ministers was the Rev. Jonathan Toothill, who was pastor of the church for 58 years, from 1768 to 1826. Last year the Congregationalists opened new day and Sunday schools at a cost of £2,500. To clear off a debt of about £1,000, a bazaar was held last week in the Mirfield Town Hall, which realised the noble sum of £974 18s. 10d.

—A kind thing was done the other day by the organist and choir of the City Temple (Dr. Parker's) for the congregation at Zion Chapel, in East London, of which the Rev. John Thomas, B.A., is the respected minister. The ladies and gentlemen referred to went over to Zion Chapel one evening last week, and, without putting the people there to a farthing of expense, gave an exceedingly interesting selection of sacred music, vocal and instrumental. Mrs. Parker sang two of the solos. The chapel was crowded; the audience was greatly delighted; and it is understood that a sum of £20 was realised, which will be devoted to the Organ Fund of Zion Chapel. This is a good example of the way in which one church may help another where there is "a willing mind."

—A bazaar was opened at the Albion Sunday-school, Ashton-under-Lyne, on Wednesday, the 13th, by Hugh Mason, Esq., M.P. The object of the undertaking was the defrayment of sundry small debts connected with the chapel, schools, and their branches, amounting to a gross sum of over £1,800, and it was hoped that at least £1,500 would be realised by the bazaar. On Saturday evening this anticipation was more than justified when the treasurer was able to announce that a sum of no less than £2,210 had been received. Still more gratifying is the fact that the collections for the London Missionary Society on the day following the bazaar exceeded by a few shillings their largest previous amount.

—The first anniversary services of the opening of the Highbury Chapel, Birmingham, have just been held, when the Rev. C. Leach, the pastor, preached two sermons to large congregations. When the chapel was opened, a year ago, there were neither congregation, church, nor Sunday-schools, and the place had been shut up for some months. Now it is found, after one year's work, that there are 350 members, 75 per cent. of whom were not in communion with any church twelve months ago. There is a congregation which crowds the chapel on Sunday evenings. The building is capable of seating 905 persons comfortably—about 600 sittings are already let. Into the Sunday-schools there have been gathered about 600 scholars, including a men's Bible-class of nearly 50 members, and two Bible-classes for women. A handsome gold watch was presented to the minister as a token of the esteem in which he is held.

— A tea meeting was held on Wednesday evening, October 13, at Providence Chapel, Uxbridge, in recognition of the settlement of the Rev. G. H. Sandwell (formerly of Crown-street Church, Ipswich) as the pastor of the church. The schoolroom was very choicely and elegantly fitted up for the occasion, and about 150 friends sat down to tea. At the meeting held afterwards, the large attendance necessitated an adjournment to the chapel. Mr. C. Heron, the senior officer of the church, presided, and formally introduced the pastor to the friends present. Mr. Sandwell addressed the meeting, and thanked the members and the congregation who had come out in such large numbers to give him their kindly greeting, and for their tokens of friendship and goodwill. The choir sang several anthems, and addresses were delivered by Messrs. Bastard, J. Atkins, Wilkins, Dimmock, Strut, Lowe, and Mardon; and the very pleasant evening's engagements were closed with prayer.

BAPTIST.

— A series of missionary meetings were last week held in Todmorden and the district.

— The seventieth anniversary of the Sunday-schools at St. Mary's-gate, Derby, was celebrated last week.

— The fifty-ninth anniversary of the school at Regent-street Chapel, Lambeth, has just been celebrated.

— The Rev. W. Wallace has retired from the pastorate of the church at Lindsay-road, Newcastle-on-Tyne.

— The annual meetings connected with the Baptist Union and Home Mission of Scotland are this week being held at Glasgow.

— The Devonport branch of the Foreign Mission reports an increased income. Morice-square Chapel contributes for the past year the sum of £22, and Hope Chapel £27.

— At the annual meetings of the Sunday-school connected with Trinity Chapel, Edgware-road, just held, it was reported that there are now 330 scholars and upwards of 30 teachers.

— The Rev. D. E. Evans, of Waterloo-road Church, Wolverhampton, has accepted the charge of the church at Lodge-road, Birmingham, and will commence his duties at the latter place on Sunday, November 7.

— We understand, with regard to the Augmentation Fund, that when all the contributions promised last year have been received, about £100 will still be needed to permit of the allowance of £20 to each of the present applicants.

— The Rev. J. J. Wright, of the Circus Chapel, Birmingham, conducts special evangelistic services for working people on Sunday afternoons in the Museum Concert Hall in that town. Up to the present the attendances have been large.

— The eighty-eighth anniversary of the Liverpool Juvenile Auxiliary of the Foreign Mission was held last week in Pembroke Chapel, Rev. E. E. Walter presiding. The Revs. E. C. B. Hallam and W. Sampson (London) delivered addresses.

— At Harrogate, on Tuesday last week, a new Baptist church was constituted. The Rev. T. Potenger presided at the meeting, and suitable addresses were delivered by the Revs. J. Webb, J. Haslam (Gildersome), G. Hill, and T. G. Cooke.

— At a meeting of the Bible-class connected with the church at Milton, Chipping Norton, the pastor (who conducts the class) received a token of esteem from the members; and at the same time he received a gold watch from the church and congregation.

— The Rev. Hugh Stowell Brown gave the inaugural address to the Young Men's Mutual Improvement Society connected with Myrtle-street Chapel, Liverpool, on Thursday last, at the opening of the thirteenth session; his subject being "Household Words from Pope."

— For the purpose of aiding the raising of a fund of £3,000, required for the erection of Sunday-school premises, in connection with the church at Blackburn, a bazaar has just been held, opened by Mr. W. E. Briggs, M.P., the Rev. C. Williams, Alderman Sudge, and others taking part.

— The annual tea and public meetings connected with the General Baptist Mission at Halifax, were held on Monday last, at North-parade Chapel, the report showing that £42 had been collected by the auxiliary during the year. The Revs. J. R. Bailey, W. Hill, and others delivered addresses.

— On Monday, October 11, an ordination and recognition service was held at Upper Stratton, near Swindon, in connection with the settlement of the Rev. J. W. Gardner as pastor. The Rev. B. Arthur Coate (Oxon), F. Pugh, J. Chew (Swindon), T. Toy (Highworth), and other friends, took part in the proceedings.

— Special services in connection with the reopening of the chapel at Liskeard, after considerable renovation and improvement, was held last week. The Rev. H. O. Mackey, of Southampton, preached on Sunday, and on Monday a tea and public meeting followed. The outlay involved in the alterations has been already contributed.

— Telegraphic intelligence on Monday reached Mr. John Lewis, of Carmarthen, of the death on that day at Laver Platz, Switzerland, of his brother, the Rev. William Mortimer Lewis, M.A., principal of Pontypool College. The deceased had been ill for a considerable time past, and had been absent on special leave in Switzerland since June last.

— In connection with the anniversary services of the school at Portland Chapel, Southampton, held last week, the Rev. J. Collins preached, and a special service for the young followed. On Tuesday evening the Rev. Charles Spurgeon preached. The report set forth that the school comprises over 350 children, with 36 teachers; and that an extension of the present accommodation is required.

— On Monday Mr. George Clarke, of Tring, eleven years pastor of the little church at Northchurch, situate between Berkhamsted and Tring, was presented with £22 as a testimonial on his retirement. The Rev. W. V. Young, of Tring, who presided, made the presentation, and the meeting was addressed by the Rev. Giles Hester, Berkhamsted, and Rev. C. Pearce, Tring, also by the new pastor, the Rev. W. Le Favre.

— Recognition services connected with the settlement of the Rev. G. D. Cox, formerly of Sittingbourne, as pastor of the church at Melton Mowbray, is

were held last week at the latter place. At a tea and public meeting on Monday evening, under the presidency of the Rev. T. Carryer, of Leicester, addresses were delivered by the Revs. R. Caven, B.A., John Bateman (Leicester), E. Stevenson (Loughborough), and J. D. Cox.

— At the annual meetings of the Plymouth Foreign Mission Auxiliary, held last week, the Rev. Benwell Bird reported that during the year George-street Chapel had raised £221, Mutley Chapel £142, besides £127 contributed by the district, covered by the two chapels. At the Zenana breakfast, held on the following morning, addresses were delivered by the Revs. Benwell Bird, C. Wilson, Mrs. Etherington, and Mr. A. H. Baynes.

— Death has been very busy during the past week in the ministerial ranks of the denomination. The third we have to announce is that of the Rev. W. Wootton, who died at Princes Risborough on Friday. Mr. Wootton entered the General Baptist ministry in 1876, at Coalville, Leicester, which he resigned in the present year, and, for the benefit of his health, removed to Princes Risborough, which pastorate he held at the time of his decease.

— Mr. R. Leake, M.P., last week opened a bazaar at Moss Side Chapel, near Manchester, under the pastorate of the Rev. T. H. Holycake, on behalf of the organ and debt fund. The sum required was nearly £600, and one-half of this amount had been raised prior to the bazaar. In the course of his address, Mr. Leake said the Baptists had always appeared to him to form one of the strongest bodies of Englishmen and Englishwomen in the acquisition and maintenance of freedom.

— We regret to record the death, on Friday last, of the Rev. Thomas James, who for eight years past has been pastor of the church at Blakeney, Forest of Dean. The deceased was a native of Llandover, and was educated at Pontypool College, which he left for the ministry in 1858. He was originally pastor of a church in Worcestershire. At Blakeney he was much esteemed, and held office upon the local Board, besides being prominently associated with other public movements. He was 50 years of age, and leaves a widow and family.

— For additional school accommodation, the church at Newton Abbott, being unable to obtain a site, have had to erect a large gallery over the front entrance of the chapel, with two class-rooms under, and at the higher end of the chapel two more class-rooms, and over these one larger room for the younger children. The lighting of the chapel has been also improved. The reopening services were held on Sunday last, the pastor, Rev. R. Hall, B.A., and E. Edwards, of Torquay, being the preachers. In the evening the scholars were presented with centenary medals. The outlay for the alterations reached between £200 and £300.

— On Sunday and Monday, October 10 and 11, the second anniversary of the chapel at Godstone, Surrey, was held. Sermons were preached on Sunday by the Rev. F. F. Medcalf, of Ilfracombe, and on the day following a tea and public meeting was held, when the people took the opportunity of presenting their pastor (Rev. G. A. Webb) with a timepiece, a lamp, and a purse of money. Mr. Webb responded, and addresses were given by the chairman W. G. Soper, Esq. (Caterham), Revs. Smith (Leeds), Robinson, B.A. (Edenbridge), Medcalf (Ilfracombe), Dugdale (Betchingley), and Perry (London). The choir sang several pieces, and the collections realised about £12.

— The anniversary services in connection with the Sunday-schools at London-road Chapel, Ipswich, were held on Sunday last. The morning and evening sermons were preached by the pastor, the Rev. T. M. Morris, and in the afternoon a service for the parents and children was conducted by the Rev. W. Emery, who succeeded Mr. Morris in the pastorate of Turret-green Chapel. The services were very largely attended, many in the evening being unable to find room. The collections amounted to £26, one of the largest amounts realised at a Sunday-school anniversary in Ipswich. One pleasing fact in connection with the school—which numbers some 527 scholars and 47 teachers and officers, in that the scholars have raised £18 10s. 4d. for the Baptist Missionary Society during the past year. The Band of Hope in connection with the school numbers 120 members.

— In connection with the seventh anniversary of Campsburne Chapel, Hornsey, special sermons were delivered on Sunday, October 10—in the morning by the Rev. J. S. Bruce (the minister), and in the evening by the Rev. A. Bax, of Islington. On the following Wednesday evening a tea and public meeting was held. At the latter the chair was taken by J. Beauchamp, Esq., of Highgate. The reports of the secretary and treasurer showed an increase in membership (the number on the books being 46), and a balance in hand on the general fund of £7 13s. 9d. The Rev. J. S. Bruce stated that a special effort was being made to clear off the debt remaining on the building—viz., £75. Interesting addresses were given by the chairman, the Revs. C. Starling, R. Layzell, J. Matthews, D. Macrae, and Mr. C. Jelliman. The proceeds of the services amounted to £15.

PRESBYTERIAN.

— Rev. Dr. Edmond's address, on Wednesday week, as Moderator of the London Presbytery, when Dr. Graham was inducted to the professorial chair of Church History and Pastoral Theology, displayed all the vigour of the Doctor's best days. It is gratifying to his numerous friends that the respected minister of Park Church, Highbury, is not only capable of discharging the full duties of his pastorate, but is able to undertake work for the benefit of the Church at large.

— Professor Graham's inaugural lecture at the opening of the College in London on "Church History" gave ample evidence that this branch of study will be placed before the students in a masterly fashion. Principal Chalmers, who presided, suitably introduced the lecturer, and there was a fitness in the Rev. A. M. Syrington's remarks at the close, seeing that he was so long the neighbour and co-Presbyterian in Liverpool of Professor Graham.

— It should encourage the subscribers to the English Sustentation Fund on learning that efforts are being made in the Free Church of Scotland to raise the lowest stipend of the ministers to £200 per annum. England should not be behind Scotland in this respect, seeing that the rate of living is a much more expensive affair in the South than in the North. Although times have improved in England, it is

with the greatest difficulty that the equal dividend of £200 is maintained.

— The Scotsman publishes a special letter from Philadelphia, giving an account of the proceedings of the Pan-Presbyterian Council: "Within the Council," says the writer, "the paper which seems to have called forth the most lively interest is that on 'Agnosticism,' submitted by Professor Flint. Considerable discussion followed upon it, and although the case of Professor Smith was not mentioned, it was quite apparent that the question raised in connection with it gave a tone to the discussion, which may thus, perhaps, be none the less useful. Some of the American brethren, without having fully considered the paper, seemed to start with the assumption that a Scottish theological professor must belong to the so-called advanced school; and Professor Flint must have smiled while a Southern divine first endeavoured to reclaim him to the paths of orthodoxy, and immediately afterwards, when a young Canadian professor, skilled in declamation, but outrageously irrelevant in the use of analogy, defended him as a champion of modern freedom of thought. This discussion clearly indicated how much of the differences on the subject arise from mutual misunderstanding of the positions contended for on either side; and if it is to be regretted that fuller opportunity of public debate could not be given, it may yet be hoped that the private discussions which have since taken place, when and wherever brethren of the Council have had opportunity of conversation, may greatly help to promote a satisfactory solution of the now world-wide controversies with which the name of Professor Smith has come to be so much associated."

— Presbyterian, says the same writer, although denominated so long ago as no "religion for a gentleman," was represented at the Council by many laymen of high position in the States. The legal profession supplied, among other distinguished delegates, Mr. Maynard, Postmaster-General under the present Government, formerly the American Minister at Constantinople; Justice Strong, of the Supreme Federal Court, and several State Judges. A Canadian Q.C., with seven British lawyers, brought up the legal contingent to over a score. The mercantile and banking community were also well represented, the best known among them being George H. Stuart, so famous as chairman of the great organisation which, under the title of the "Christian Commission," did so much to alleviate the horrors of the war. While the clergy took the most prominent part in the discussions of the Council, some of the laymen did good service. Thus Mr. Dodge, of New York, read a paper on temperance, and the papers on religious education of the young brought a whole string of lawyers to their feet.

— In response to a memorial to the Newcastle Presbytery, services were commenced in Seaham Harbour on Sunday, under very favourable auspices. The Rev. J. S. Rae preached in the morning, and the Rev. F. Frank in the evening, to congregations which filled the Oddfellows' Hall.

— The memorial-stone of the new church at Canterbury will be laid on the afternoon of November 4. The event will be of more than ordinary interest, and the London Presbytery will be strongly represented on the occasion.

— The Sabbath Alliance of Scotland has been passing a resolution condemning the Rev. Dr. Donald Fraser's sermon on the "Lord's Day." Not content with this, the Alliance "calls upon the Presbytery of London to take action in the matter." The London Presbytery is not usually dictated to by an outside body, more especially one which is totally ignorant of English manners and customs. Moreover, the Presbytery is quite able to take care of itself, and does not stand in need of a fussy interference from without.

— The Clapham congregation have this week been celebrating the fifth anniversary of the settlement of the Rev. Dr. MacEwan as their pastor. On Sunday sermons were preached by the Rev. Dr. Monroe Gibson and the Rev. J. P. Chown. A largely-attended soiree was held on Tuesday evening, under the presidency of Mr. Alderman McArthur, Lord Mayor-elect. Mr. McArthur expressed the hope that ere long the United Presbyterian and the Free Church would be one. Mr. Russell spoke of the successful home-mission work the congregation were carrying on at the Mission Hall in Stewart's-lane, at the "Horns" Assembly-rooms, and at Verulam Chapel. He also mentioned that since Dr. MacEwan's settlement 650 members were added to the Connexion roll, while the congregation had raised no less than £20,711. There would shortly be an organ placed in the church. Dr. MacEwan upon the success of his labours, and was followed by the Rev. E. D. Wilson and Dr. Barnardo.

— The second anniversary of the church at Wellingborough, Surrey, was held on Tuesday evening. The pastor, the Rev. J. Stuart, M.A., who occupied the chair, congratulated the congregation on the unity which had been kept up since the last meeting a year ago. He also congratulated the people on the increase which had taken place; for, though comparatively small, it was genuine, and might be taken as an omen of more good in the future. Speeches followed by Dr. W. Kennedy Moore, Dr. Boyd, and Messrs. Bell, Filmer, and Sandford. In regard to the general work of the church, it was stated that a mission station had been opened at Carshalton. References were also made to the desirability of securing a piece of land on which to erect the proposed new church. A ladies' association for a bazaar had also been formed.

— Rev. Dr. Lees, of Edinburgh, conducted services in Balmoral Castle on Sunday morning, in presence of the Queen, the Royal Family, and the Household.

— For some time past an excellent photographic group (coloured) of the recently-licensed students of the London College, with their professors, has been exhibited by the London Stereoscopic Company in their premises at Cheapside. The fidelity of the likenesses and the naturalness of the grouping has attracted considerable attention.

— The Brampton congregation has decided to call the Rev. Hugh McLean, Licentiate of the London Presbytery.

— In a recent number of the *Sunday at Home*, there appeared a very interesting sketch of "The Early Struggles of a Sunday-school." Many of our readers will be pleased to know that the school referred to is that in connection with the Presbyterian church

at Victoria Docks. Started on the 13th October, 1871, with only eight scholars, in the room of a common dwelling-house, it numbers today 440 pupils, who are accommodated in a fine building, erected for the purpose, through the munificence of James Duncan, Esq. The founder of the school, the Rev. R. Hunter, has been its guiding spirit all these years, and is as enthusiastic in the good work as ever. On Thursday evening last the ninth anniversary was celebrated by a tea meeting and by a public meeting afterwards, held in the adjoining church, when James Ness, Esq., presided, and the children who filled the building were addressed by H. M. Matheson, Esq., the Rev. Alex. Jeffrey, the Rev. James Farquharson, and the Rev. Thomas Howell. On Sunday sermons in connection with this anniversary were preached by the Rev. T. Howell, who at the same time bade an affectionate farewell to his flock. Mr. Howell will be introduced to his new charge at Stockton-on-Tees on the 31st inst., by the Rev. John Matheson, of Hampstead.

— On Sunday several of the churches in Liverpool, says the *Mercury* of that city, held missionary anniversary services, which were largely attended. The Presbytery of Liverpool has been desirous for some months past to arrange for a combination of such services at a given time, and, as the result of a motion introduced in the Presbytery by one of the elders, Mr. Cumming Andrews, a united missionary gathering is expected to take place in March next, and to be continued annually. Meanwhile it is evident from the various reports that a large amount of home mission work is being carried on in Liverpool by the different Presbyterian congregations, in the form of "children's churches" on the Sunday mornings, Sunday schools in the afternoon and evening, attended by thousands of boys and girls; Dorcas societies, tract distribution agencies, penny banks, week-night classes for sacred music, the circulation of improving literature, young men's literary associations, popular lectures, and kindred means of evangelistic effort.

— The memorial-stone of a new United Presbyterian Church in Gilmore-place, Edinburgh, for the Rev. Robert Small's congregation, was laid on Saturday.

— Rev. James Ridd, of Glasgow, has accepted a call from the St. Andrew's congregation.

— Rev. James McGough has been ordained at Kilmarnock—Rev. Robert Shaw has been ordained at Brandon-street United Presbyterian Church, Hamilton—Rev. W. H. Telford has been ordained as colleague minister of the Free Church congregation, Forgandenny.

WESLEYAN.

— The Mutual Improvement Societies in connection with Wesleyan chapels appear to be increasing in number and in usefulness. An effort is in progress or bringing them into closer union, providing lecturers, and altogether improving their work. In some circuits the various societies have united meetings from time to time, when subjects are discussed in true Parliamentary fashion, a speaker being appointed and the rules which obtain at St. Stephen's being duly observed. At Wesley Chapel, Bristol, the Mutual Improvement Society has opened its session under encouraging circumstances. Mr. G. M. Savery, M.A., of Taunton College, gave a capital inaugural lecture on "Elocution."

— The seventh anniversary of Trinity Chapel, Hornsey, has been held, sermons being preached by Rev. Josiah Evans and the Rev. J. McKenny. At the public meeting Mr. Holman presided. It is proposed to take advantage of the recent liberal offer of Sir Francis Lycett to give a sum of £500 towards each of ten new chapels, the erection of which is to be commenced in London before the end of July next year; the committee of the Metropolitan Wesleyan Chapel Building Fund also promising a similar amount. The friends are anxious to secure a permanent structure, and with £1,000 (loan and grant) in all from the fund and Sir F. Lycett a good start will be made.

— At Leamington missionary services have been held at Dale-street Chapel. The Rev. J. V. B. Shrewsbury, of Birmingham, preached the sermons. At the annual meeting, W. Newbury, Esq., of Wykham-park, Banbury, presided; the Rev. J. Butlin, B.A. (Baptist) offered the opening prayer, the Rev. C. Winter read the report, and Mr. England the financial statement. Among the speakers were the Rev. J. V. B. Shrewsbury, the Rev. Dr. Punshon, Rev. W. J. Hutton, Rev. W. J. Boote, Mr. Hyde, Mr. Hodkinson, and others. The collections were in advance of last year's.

— At Southwell the Rev. P. Mackenzie has preached anniversary sermons, and delivered his lecture on "Gideon, the Mighty Man of Valour." The collections and the proceeds of a tea-meeting amounted to about £25.

— At Frodsham successful missionary services have been held. At the public meeting Mr. Robert Shaw, of Runcorn, presided, and the Revs. W. Willey and J. H. Morgan were the deputation. The annual sermons were preached by the Rev. W. J. Elvy.

— The extensive tract society in connection with the Whitefield-road Chapel, Liverpool, had its annual social gathering on the 6th inst., when about 600 persons partook of tea, and addresses were afterwards given by the Rev. G. Mathew, the Rev. J. Travis (Primitive Methodist), Rev. Hugh Hughes, the Rev. A. B. Matthew (Methodist Free Church), and others. Mr. J. Lloyd Jones presided. There are 60 tract distributors connected with the organisation, and about 12,000 tracts are lent or given annually.

— At Ventnor the missionary anniversary sermons have been preached by the Rev. Thos. Lench, and at the annual meeting the Rev. G. Dickenson was the deputation. The collections showed an advance.

— At Shanklin Chapel anniversary sermons have been preached by the Rev. Robert Stevenson. At the public meeting, Mr. E. R. Minter, of Ryde, presided; and addresses were given by the Rev. T. Le

THE NONCONFORMIST AND INDEPENDENT.

OCTOBER 21, 1880.

S. Wilkes, and others. The sum of £20 was realised for the circuit funds.—Mr. Jos. D. Lelean, a valued office-bearer at Mevagissey, has been presented with a valuable timepiece on leaving that place.

— At the annual missionary meeting held at Mountsorrel on the 6th inst., Mr. A. Foulds, of Loughborough, presided. Addresses were given by the Rev. R. Stephenson, B.A. (late missionary in India), Mr. Rathbone Edge, the Rev. J. Gilbert (superintendent of the circuit), and others. The collections were above those of last year.

— At the Edinburgh and Aberdeen District Meeting the Rev. W. F. Slater, M.A., presided. The Rev. E. E. Jenkins, M.A., President of the Conference, and his colleagues on the Foreign Missionary deputation, were present, and the President gave an address in which he spoke of the necessity of preaching the old doctrines in the old Methodist style. The Rev. R. N. Young followed, and the Rev. S. Whitehead (from China) spoke of missionary organisation and the best method of conducting missionary meetings. It was reported that the sum of £3,400 had been promised in the district, for the Thanksgiving Fund, and that one half of that sum had been paid. Special evangelistic services are to be held in the various circuits.

— At a largely-attended circuit meeting held at Horsham, Sussex, the circuit minister—the Rev. J. Little—has been presented with costly additions of books for his library; and it was stated, amid tokens of district appreciation, that the effective ministry of Mr. Little had quickened the Horsham Circuit into a warmth and an activity not usual in the cold and stately religious circles of Sussex. It was resolved to push forward the local activities during the ensuing winter.

— The recommendation of the last Conference that the Thanksgiving Fund movement should be followed by special evangelistic gatherings, has already been acted upon in Manchester. A preparatory conference was held in the Grosvenor-street Chapel on the 13th inst., and a letter from the Rev. Dr. W. B. Pope was read, and a sermon was preached by the same able minister. In the afternoon and evening meetings for conference and prayer were held at Oldham-street Chapel. The Rev. J. Tindall, Benjamin Smith, J. C. Woodcock, Joseph Nettleton, J. S. Cooke, Josiah Pearson, Dr. Pope, and W. T. Radcliffe, Messrs. R. Haworth, J. Napier, and T. Willshaw taking part in the proceedings. These gatherings are preparatory to prayer-meetings and evangelistic services in the various circuits.

— On Monday the memorial-stone of a new Wesleyan Methodist church, which is being erected for the John-street congregation in Sauchiehall-street, Glasgow, was laid by Mr. Duncan Miller. The church will be seated for 785 persons, and the hall in connection with it for 500, while the cost is estimated at £8,200.

UNITED METHODIST FREE CHURCHES.

— The Autumnal Session of the Newcastle-on-Tyne District was held in Dock-street Chapel, Sunderland, on Thursday last. The reports from the circuit were, with few exceptions, of a very encouraging nature. A resolution was passed earnestly urging the churches in the district to make arrangements for special religious services during the coming winter. The Rev. J. Studdart, who for some time has had charge of the church at Cullercoats, was heartily and unanimously recommended to the Connexional Committee and the Annual Assembly for readmission into the ministry of the denomination. Sympathy was expressed with the widows and orphans of those who have perished by the Seaman master, and the churches were requested to adopt immediate measures for assisting the societies in Jamaica that have suffered from the recent hurricane.

— On Monday evening Mr. Arthur Pease, M.P., occupied the chair at a missionary meeting held in Paradise Chapel, Darlington, and in an able speech advocated the claims of missions. The Rev. L. Bleby, A. Holiday, and others subsequently took part in the proceedings. The report stated that during the last year the Darlington Circuit had raised £139 for the Mission Fund, and that of this sum Darlington had contributed £84.

— The Blyth Circuit reports a net increase of seven members on the past quarter, and an improved condition of the churches generally. The Rev. H. D. Crowe has consented to remain in the circuit a third year.

— From the chapel fund report just issued, it appears that during the past year, there were expended in the Connexion for new chapels, schools, enlargements, &c., £50,402, towards which £25,160 were raised, and that there was realised for reduction of debts on other premises £19,692, making a total of £45,882.

— On Sunday afternoon, the Rev. Joseph Kendall, of Market Rasen, in compliance with the request of the vicar, assisted at an interment in the churchyard. Mr. Kendall read part of the burial service in the church, the vicar officiated at the grave, and invited those present to re-enter the church and listen to an address from his Dissenting brother. Such rare example of Christian charity on the part of a Church of England clergyman deserves to be noticed and commended.

— The Rev. R. D. Maude, of Lincoln, will remove to Newcastle-on-Tyne in August next.

— The chapel at Bramley has been altered and painted at a cost of about £80. Re-opening services were conducted by the Revs. W. Griffith, M. G. Coker, G. Kaines, and Mr. Richards.

— The October Meeting of the London District was held in Manor-road Chapel, London Fourth Circuit, on Monday last. The Rev. M. T. Myers presided, and the Rev. J. W. Mawer was elected secretary. The report from the circuits were, on the whole, satisfactory. The chapel now erecting at Thornton-heath is expected to be ready for opening before the close of the year. It was decided to hold the Annual Assembly for 1881 in the Memorial Hall, and a committee was appointed to make arrangements for the entertainment of its members. It was also decided that the usual May Missionary Meeting should be held next year, and measures were adopted to make it successful.

— The Rev. B. Stubbs has received and accepted an invitation to serve the Rotherham Circuit two

years after the close of the present Connexional year, when he will have completed his fourth year.

— Mr. John Sampson, of Liskeard, has conducted a fortnight's special services at the Ebenezer Chapel, Radstock, with much success.

— The Barrow-in-Furness Circuit reports an increase of seven members for the quarter.

— The Autumnal Session of the Birmingham District was held at Wolverhampton on the 11th inst. In most of the circuits there are signs of increased spiritual life, and many young persons have recently been converted. A resolution was passed expressing sympathy with the Rev. W. Toppin, who is suffering severe personal affliction, and many generous offers of service were made by the ministers to supply the pulpit of the Darlaston Church. In the evening a public meeting was held in the chapel, the Rev. C. R. Ramsaw in the chair. Addresses were delivered by the Revs. A. Jones, W. Micklithwaite, and E. Orme, the choir rendering efficient service.

— The Autumnal District Meeting was held a Manor-road Chapel, Bermondsey, on the 15th inst. Generally speaking, the reports from the various circuits were of a very encouraging character; but the condition of the London Sixth gave rise to considerable discussion. An application was made from the London Fifth for a grant of £15 on behalf of the new school, and enlargement of the chapel at Forest Gate. The friends here are about to build a school to accommodate about 900 scholars. It will be the largest Free Methodist school in London. The grant was unanimously recommended. An application for a loan of £150 to Grays was also recommended.

— A European edition of *Harper's Magazine* is projected, to be published by Messrs. Sampson Low and Co., London. This periodical, whose name is a household word in America, where it circulates 140,000 copies, has been the means, in its sixty volumes, of introducing to the American public many of the leading novels of Bulwer, Dickens, Thackeray, and George Eliot, and other English writers. The use of such copyright material has hitherto prevented the sale of the magazine here, but future arrangements will obviate this difficulty by covering the right of serial publication both in England and America. It is understood that Mr. Thomas Hardy is engaged upon a new novel, to be illustrated by Mr. Du Maurier, of *Punch*, which will accordingly appear exclusively in *Harper's*. Our American contemporary will be further naturalised by the introduction of English editorial departments, though the "Editor's Drawer," the popular medium of American humour, will be retained; by a number of articles on scenery and manners this side the sea, illustrated both by noted English artists and by Americans, who have recently come over for that purpose. The illustrations are, in fact, a chief feature of this monthly, which, in its 160 pages, gives commonly from 70 to 100 wood-engravings of a high art standard, as well as of popular interest. The magazine is to be issued here at a shilling, which is much less than the American price.

— Messrs. Cassell, Petter, Galpin, and Co. intend to issue immediately, in monthly parts, a thoroughly revised edition of "Cassell's Popular Educator," competent editors having been engaged during the past two years in bringing down to date each department of knowledge dealt with in the work.

— Lord Ellenborough's "Diary," which is to be published at the end of November by Mr. Bentley, contains a great many details of the lives of George IV. and William IV., anecdotal matter referring to the Russo-Turkish War of 1828-9, Catholic Emancipation, and the French Revolution of 1830, besides illustrations of character of the chief public men engaged in affairs in the later years of the Fourth George and the earlier of the Fourth William.

— The lectures at Newnham College, Cambridge, this term include courses by four lady lecturers—Miss Crofts, Miss Merrifield, Miss Harland, and Miss Scott. M. Boquelintends to make *vivat voce* translation into French from Lord Lytton's "Caxtons" a prominent feature of his course.

— The Record announces the death, at the age of sixty-one, of Miss Maria Louisa Charlesworth, the gifted authoress of "Ministering Children," and other well-known works of fiction intended to illustrate the application of religion to everyday life.

— DR. DE JONGH'S LIGHT-BROWN COD LIVER OIL.—ITS UNQUELLED EFFICACY IN DISEASES OF THE THROAT.—Sir G. Duncan Gibb, Bart., M.R., LL.D., Physician and Lecturer on Forensic Medicine, Westminster Hospital, author of various works on Diseases of the Throat and Larynx, writes:—"The experience of many years has abundantly proved the truth of every word said in favour of Dr. de Jongh's Light-Brown Cod Liver Oil by many of our first Physicians and Chemists, thus stamping him as a high authority and an able Chemist whose investigations have remained unquestioned. Its value, therefore, as a therapeutic agent in a number of diseases, chiefly of an exhaustive character, has been admitted by the world of medicine; but, in addition, I have found it a remedy of great power in the treatment of many affections of the Throat and Larynx, especially in Consumption of the latter, where it will sustain life when everything else fails. Dr. de Jongh's Light-Brown Cod Liver Oil has an agreeable flavour, is very palatable, and liked by children; hence its value in the third stage of Hooping-Cough, when it acts as a restorative and tonic." Dr. de Jongh's Light-Brown Cod Liver Oil is sold only in capsules imperial half-pints, 2s. 6d.; pints, 4s. 9d.; quarts, 9s.; with his stamp and signature and the signature of his sole consignees on the capsule and the label under wrapper, by all chemists, Sole Consignees, Ansar, Harford and Co., 77, Strand, London.

— NATIONAL THRIFT BUILDING SOCIETY.—Preference Shares of 10/- each, bearing 5 per cent. interest, are now being issued at par. These shares may be paid up in one sum, or by Instalments extending over two years. All information may be had on application at 33, New Bridge-street, Blackfriars, London, E.C.

BIRTHS.

CHURCHILL.—Oct. 15, at 6, Wellington-street, Teignmouth the wife of S. Churchill, of a son.

COPINGER.—Oct. 15, at Park-street, Greenheys, Manchester, the wife of the Rev. H. E. Copinger, of a son.

DUPUIS.—Oct. 16, at Widcombe-crescent, Bath, the wife of Rev. T. C. Dupuis, Burnham Vicarage, Somerset, of a daughter.

FLOWER.—Oct. 11, at Nottingham, the wife of J. Ed. Flower, M.A., Pastor, of a daughter.

FOYSTER.—Oct. 12, at All Saints' Rectory, Hastings, the wife of the Rev. G. A. Foyster, of a son.

HARRISON.—Oct. 17, at Newport, Isle of Wight, the wife of the Rev. Jos. East Harrison, of a son.

HOPKINS.—Oct. 13, the wife of the Rev. T. Daniel Hopkins, M.A., Rector of All Saints' and St. Andrew's, Chichester, of a daughter.

WAINWRIGHT.—Oct. 15, at Stirling, the wife of Ernest C. Wainwright, Esq., Ordnance Department, Stirling Castle, of a son.

WILKS.—Oct. 14, at Upware, near Dorchester, the wife of Rev. J. Wilks, of the London Missionary Society, Madagascar, of a son.

MARRIAGES.

BELL.—STEMP.—Oct. 12, at the Wesleyan Chapel, Brixton-hill by the Rev. P. J. Sharpe, Charles Edward, eldest son of Mr. C. C. Bell, of Wearside, St. Saviour's-road, Brixton-hill, to Sarah Ann, eldest daughter of Mr. George Stemp, of Manor-rise, Brixton.

JACKON—STOKES.—Oct. 13, at Neuchatel, Switzerland, the Rev. R. Jackson, of Cockermouth, Cumberland, to Sarah, daughter of the late William Stokes, of Alsworth, Northamshire.

HADLEY—MASKERY.—Oct. 12, at the Congregational Church, Ryde, by the Rev. J. Moore, of Congleton, assisted by the Rev. A. Francis, Alfred William, only son of Benj. Hadley, J. P., Congleton, to Charlotte (Clarie), only daughter of the late Samuel Maskery, Congleton.

THURNAM—MOSLEY.—Oct. 14, at the parish church, Caterham, by the Rev. C. H. Keeble, M. A., Francis Wyat Thurnam, M. B., of Yardley-Hastings, to E. A. (Lily) Isleton, elder daughter of the late Alfred Mosley.

DEATHS.

BOWYER.—Oct. 11, at Gravesend, the Rev. James Bowyer, in his 71st year; formerly S.P.G. Missionary at Howrah, Calcutta.

BRIGGS.—Oct. 16, at Dovedale-place, Battersby, Elizabeth Briggs, aged 80 years; for 65 years the devoted nurse and faithful friend of the family of the late Cleo Hooper, of Hayes, Sussex.

BRISCOE.—Oct. 17, in his 73rd year, the Rev. Richard Briscoe, D.D., Rector of Nutfield, Surrey.

CHARLESWORTH.—Oct. 16, at Nutfield, Surrey, Maria Louisa Charlesworth, daughter of the Rev. John Charlesworth, late Rector of St. Mildred's, Broad-street, London, and former Rector of Flotow, Suffolk. Author of "Ministering Children," and other works of fiction.

CLARE.—Oct. 18, at Malvern-terrace, Kilburn, the Rev. Hamilton J. Clare, aged 68.

GODFREY.—Oct. 16, at The Hundreds, Romsey, Fanny, the beloved wife of Walter Edmonbury Godfrey, J.P., aged 53.

HALL.—Oct. 16, at Finsbury-road, South Kensington, Julia, widow of the late Rev. W. J. Hall, Vicar of Tottenham, in her 70th year.

HALLETT.—Oct. 11, at Norwich, after a long illness, the Rev. John Hallett, aged 57, Minister of the Old Meeting House, Norwich, 29 years. Friends will please accept this intimation.

HOGG.—Oct. 11, at St. Mary's-square, W., Mr. William Hogg, for 47 years Parish Clerk of Paddington, in his 70th year.

JAMIESON.—Oct. 16, at Lynford, Norfolk, Thomas Jamieson, a native of Melrose, aged 82, for 30 years Head Game-keeper to Mrs. Lyne Stephens, and eight years with Sir Walter Scott.

JUPE.—Oct. 17, of bronchitis, Hannah, wife of Mr. Charles Jupe, Mere, Wiltshire. Much beloved.

NEEDHAM.—Oct. 11, Ann Stourton Needham, of Cedar-row, Wandsworth-road, was called by apoplexy in her 81st year, from her ministrations of love on earth, to the fruition of eternal love in heaven. Over 60 years Sunday school teacher—very many years a member of Surrey Chapel.

SISSEY.—Oct. 18, at Offord Cluny, Huntingdon, Elizabeth, widow of the late Thomas Sissey, Esq., aged 26.

SMITH.—Oct. 14, killed while crossing the railway at Foresthill, A. B. Smith, son of the late Henry Smith, late of Penge, aged 20.

STEVENS.—Oct. 15, at Sway, Lympstone, Hants, Mrs. Stevens, late of Minster-place, Ely, Cambridgeshire, aged 62.

WHEATLEY.—Sept. 1, at Ningpo, Edmund Wheatley, of the Imperial Customs, aged 41. Friends will please accept this intimation.

THROAT IRRITATION.—Soreness and dryness, tickling and irritation, inducing cough and affecting the voice. For these symptoms use Epp's Glycerine Jujubes. Glycerine, in these agreeable confections, being in proximity to the glands at the moment they are excited by the act of sucking, becomes actively healing. Sold only in boxes, 7d. and 1s. 1d., labelled "James Epp and Co., Homeopathic Chemists, London." A letter received: "Gentlemen.—It may, perhaps, interest you to know that, after an extended trial, I have found your Glycerine Jujubes of considerable benefit (with or without medical treatment) in almost all forms of throat disease. They soften and clear the voice. In no case can they do any harm.—Yours faithfully, GORDON HOLMES, L.R.C.P.E., Senior Physician to the Municipal Throat and Ear Infirmary."

DOING.—"DOING AT HOME.—A sixpenny bottle of Judson's Magenta will dye a table cover or a small curtain completely in ten minutes in a pailful of water. Silk scarfs, veils, braid, ribbons, may be dyed crimson, scarlet, violet, &c., in a basin of water. Judson's Dyes. Sold by chemists everywhere.

THE ADMIRATION OF THE WORLD.—Mrs. S. A. Allen's World's Hair Restorer is perfection for its wonderful life-giving properties to faded or falling hair, and quickly changing grey or white hair to its natural youthful colour and beauty. It is not a dye. It requires only a few applications to restore grey hair to its youthful colour and lustrous beauty, and induce luxuriant growth, and its occasional use is all that is needed to preserve it in its highest perfection and beauty. Dandruff is quickly and permanently removed. Sold by all Chemists and Perfumers.

MOTHERS AND NURSES.—For children cutting teeth nothing equals Mrs. Johnson's Soothing Syrup, which contains no narcotic, and applied to the gums gives speedy relief. Of all chemists 2s. 9d. per bottle.

HOLLOWAY'S OINTMENT AND PILLS.—Health's Defences.—None save the strongest can with impunity pass through the sudden transitions from wet to dry, from cold to muggy weather, so prevalent during the late autumn and early winter months. Influenza, bronchitis, cough, sore throat, or quinsy will attack those most suddenly of their health; but they can readily arrest any of these complaints by rubbing Holloway's Ointment twice a day upon the skin adjacent to the affected part, and by assisting its corrective action with appropriate doses of his Pills.

This well-known, safe, and easy mode of treatment efficiently protects the invalid both from present and future danger without weakening or even depressing the system in the slightest degree.

NOTICE.

MESSRS. COOKE BAINES and CO., Surveyors and Valuers, hereby intimate, that the Metropolitan Board of Works having decided to rename the thoroughfare from Moorgate-street to Finsbury-square, their Offices will in future be known as 70, FINSBURY-PAVEMENT E.C.

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